

# Incommunicado

by Philip Buckland



*A Rich Chandler mystery*



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***The Frank Hurley series***

*The Cranston Occurrence*

*The Hiders*

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*Invisible, We're Here*

*The Live End*

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*A Scientist is Missing*

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# CHAPTER I

Harvester's Market was a grocery store. It was on Meridian Street in Bellingham, Washington.

Steve Vikor, box boy for Harvester's, was here at Harvester's now. He walked out of the store and into the parking lot and collected all of the shopping carts that were here in the parking lot and took them up here to the front of the store and parked them here in front of the store. Steve was tall, stringy, had blond hair, clear, dark blue eyes, a chiseled face, and he was wearing a sky blue apron, a short sleeve white shirt, no tie, open collar, white jeans, and white tennis shoes.

Steve was turning away from the carts now so he could go back into the store and continue working inside the store. Then he

stopped suddenly and looked. Then, his gaze became fixed. He stood tall and erect. Then he walked into the store instead of running into the store so he wouldn't be noticed, and then he got behind a wall and stood against it, and then he peeked over the wall.

A woman drove up to the store and made the turn and drove into the parking lot of the store. Then she parked the forest green Pontiac with black hardtop here inside the parking lot. Then she withdrew the key from the ignition and put it and the rest of the keys that were on the key chain underneath the mat on the floor of the front seat of the car, and then she got out of the car and closed the door.

She was tall, plump, had red hair, green eyes, a creamy pallor complexion, thin beige lips, and she was wearing a long sleeve purple turtleneck sweater and matching pants and black leather gloves and shiny black boots; and the strap of her shiny black shoulder strap handbag was resting on her



right shoulder, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her purse.

Her eyes were searching the area now. She wanted to make sure that no one would see her leave the car. She didn't want anyone to see her leave the car. She didn't see anyone seeing what she was doing. No one was inside the parking lot of the store, and no one was going into or out of the store, either. But she didn't see what Steve was doing. He was making sure of that. Then the woman walked away from the car instead of running away from the car so she won't be noticed, and then she walked out of the parking lot of the store instead of ran out of the parking lot of the store so she won't be noticed, and then she walked down the street instead of running down the street so she won't be noticed, and then she walked away from the store instead of running away from the store so she won't be noticed.

Steve wondered about what the woman was doing. It didn't look like she was

committing a crime, but it looked like she was doing something suspicious. Steve realized he should tell his boss what the woman was doing. His boss should know what the woman was doing. Then Steve ran through the store and looked around for his boss.

When the woman came to the nearest cross street, she turned onto it and walked down it so she wouldn't be seen leaving the store and so no one would see what she was going to do next: she came to another cross street, and then she stopped at it and took her cell phone out of her pocket and called a cab and told the dispatcher where she was and where she wanted to go to. Then the dispatcher told the woman the cab will come pick her up in a few moments and take her to her destination. Then the woman and the dispatcher hung up, and then the woman put her cell phone back into her pocket and watched for the cab.

The cab came and took the woman to

her destination, and when the cab driver brought the woman here to her destination, the woman paid the cab driver and got out of the cab, and then the cab driver drove away and the woman watched the cab driver drive away until the cab driver was completely out of her sight.

She was walking down the street so she could go to the street she wanted to go to now. She hadn't told the cab driver that she wanted to go to the street she wanted to go to. If she had told the cab driver she wanted to go to that street, and the cab driver took her to that street, he'd make a record of his taking her to that street. The woman couldn't have that.

When she got to the street she wanted to go to, she turned onto it and walked down it.

When she came here to a blue Toyota, she unlocked it and got into it, and then she started it up and pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street so she could go to her final

destination.

When she got here to her final destination, a motel here outside Bellingham, she pulled up to her motel room and brought her car to a complete stop next to the room. Then she parked her car and got out of it and locked it, and then she walked over to her motel room and unlocked the door and opened the door and walked into the room and closed the door.

## CHAPTER II

My name is Chandler. Rich Chandler. I'm an investigator for Patrol Insurance. And you'll find Patrol on Holly Street in Bellingham, and you'll find my office in Investigations, the department of Patrol that I work for.

I was here inside my office now. Sitting here behind my desk and penning my way through some papers.

The phone rang. I picked up the receiver and said my name.

"Good morning, Rich. It's Marla," said Marla Hoyt, John Thatcher's secretary. "How are ya?"

"Fine. You?"

"Fine. John needs to see you."

"I'm on my way." Then I replaced the receiver of my phone and left my office.

John Thatcher was the head of Investigations for Patrol. His office was right down the hall.

When I reached his office, I walked into it. I was stepping into the reception room of his office now.

Marla was sitting behind her console and looking at some papers and writing things on them. She looked up from her paperwork when she heard the door open and saw me come in.

I walked over to her and spoke to her: "Well. What is it today? Did someone slip on a banana peel and fall into someone's barbecue? Or did someone step on a rock and fall into a bottomless pit? Or did someone slip on a puddle of water and crash into a wall? Or did someone bury his foot into the accelerator of his car unintentionally and then the car sped up, but he was unable to let up on the accelerator? Or . . ."

"No. . . Nothing as exciting as that."

Marla said. Then she picked up the receiver of her phone and spoke into it: "Rich is here...I'll do that." Then she replaced the receiver of her phone and spoke to me again: "John will see you now."

I went into John's office.

John was sitting behind his big, long cedar desk and doing some computer work. He looked up at me when he heard the door open and saw me come in. Then he spoke to me: "Grab a chair, Rich. I'll be with you."

I pulled up one of the comfortable leather armchairs that matched the color of John's desk and sat down in it.

John finished his computer work and saved it, and then he turned the computer off and leaned back in his chair and spoke to me: "Ready to do some work?"

"Yeah, I am," I said. "And I'm wondering what the work is?"

John took a photograph off of his desk and gave it to me and I looked at what was in the photograph: a gold pocket watch with

a Labyrinth on the cover of the watch and on the Labyrinth was the head of the Minotaur.

"The Minotaur and the Labyrinth pocket watch," John said to me. "It's solid gold, one of a kind. It was made by Pietro Giovanni. He's a watchmaker in Seattle. Anson Burrell, the owner and manager of Components, Inc., owns the watch. He had Giovanni make it for him, and he had Patrol Insurance insure it for him. For fifteen thousand dollars. And we have to find it. Last week it was stolen. It looked like the thief had seen the watch somewhere, and then he found out who owns the watch and where he lives and works, and followed and watched him until he saw Burrell go home from work one day, and then he snuck into Burrell's house and stole the watch when Burrell was taking a shower. After Burrell finished taking his shower, he went into his room, and then he noticed the watch was gone. He tried to find it, but he couldn't. Then he called Patrol and the police and told us his watch was gone.



The police have already talked to Burrell about the watch."

"Have they found out anything about the theft? Anything important?"

"Only that it looked like the thief snuck into the back of Burrell's place and jimmied the lock of the sliding glass door and snuck into Burrell's place and stole the watch while Burrell was taking his shower, and snuck out of Burrell's place and back into his car and got away. No one saw or heard what he did."

"Smooth."

"Yeah. And the thief must have worn gloves, too. The only fingerprints the police found inside Burrell's place were Burrell's fingerprints."

"A nice, clean job of stealing."

"Yeah. Jim Storch represents Burrell, and he's talked to Burrell about the theft of the watch. Burrell told Jim everything about the theft of his watch that he told the police: it looked like the thief followed Burrell to Burrell's place and snuck into Burrell's place

when Burrell was taking his shower and stole the watch and snuck out of Burrell's house and back into his car and escaped without being seen or heard." Jim Storch was an insurance agent for Patrol.

"And I imagine our department has to do a follow up investigation of the theft of the watch?"

"That's right. We'll have to. But if we can't find the watch, we pay off."

"Of course. Fifteen thousand dollars. That's a lot of money."

"Yes, it is."

"Money: the root of all happiness."

John laughed.

"You know something . . . " I continued. "Since the thief knows that the watch belongs to Burrell, then he's not going to take it with him and use it. If he does, and if someone sees him using it, and recognizes the watch, he'll ask the thief where he got the watch. Or he might call the police. Because of this, the thief's going to have to

keep the watch in hiding and not take it with him. The only thing he'll be able to do with the watch is keep track of time when he's at home, but he'll have to use a different watch to keep track of time whenever he's away from his place."

"I know. I thought of that, too. Because of this, I already put feelers out. If I hear anything back about the watch, I'll tell you."

"All right. And the thief might have a hard time fencing the watch, too, if he wants to fence it since he knows the watch is hot."

"I know. I thought of that, also. And because of that, I already put feelers out on *that*. If I hear anything back about *that*, I'll tell you."

"All right. Anything else?"

"No. I think that's it." Then John told me to give him back the picture of the watch, and I did, and then he put the picture of the watch into the folder, and then he gave me the folder and told me that the folder contained information on Burrell as well as

it contained the information on his watch.

"Good luck, Rich," John said.

"Thanks," I said. Then I left John's office.

I was walking through the reception room of John's office now.

Marla was still sitting behind her console, but this time she was doing some computer work. She saw me walking through the reception room and spoke to me: "So you're going to find a pocket watch this time, huh?"

"Yeah," I said. "What's this world coming too?"

I was here inside *my* office now. Sitting behind my desk and reading the file on Burrell. The file contained Burrell's name and occupation and home address and landline phone number at his home and his cell phone number and the phone number of his landline phone at his office at Components, Inc. and a picture of Burrell. Burrell had black hair, hazel eyes, and a lean, rather handsome face. The file also told me

that Burrell was five feet eleven inches, and a hundred and seventy-five pounds.

The file also told me that Components, Inc. was a company that made and warehoused and distributed machine parts, and that the company was here in Bellingham. The file also told me the address of Components, Inc. The file also told me that Patrol was insuring Burrell's life and that his sister, Anna, was the beneficiary; the file also told me that Patrol was also insuring Burrell's health and his house and his car and his business and that Patrol was also carrying accident insurance on his employees, and that Patrol was also carrying embezzlement and theft insurance on his business.

The file told also told me the same thing about the pocket watch that John had already told me.

After I finished reading the file, I looked at my watch. Eleven fifty-five.

It was going to be lunchtime in five

minutes. People who work usually have lunch at noon. Because of this I decided to see Burrell about his watch after lunch. Not only that, for all I knew, Burrell maybe having lunch right now. Not only that, I was getting hungry. So I decided to eat lunch right now while I had the chance to eat right now. Because I didn't know when I was going to get the chance to eat again. That was the way it was in the insurance investigation business: whenever you have the chance to do something, you take it. Because you don't know when you'll get the chance to do it again. So I put the file on Burrell into my filing cabinet, and locked up the cabinet, and then I stepped out of my office and locked it so I could leave my office and leave Patrol and go somewhere and have lunch.

I was here at El Albanil right now. El Albanil was on Byron Street. El Albanil was a wonderful Mexican restaurant. I had eaten here before. I was sitting at the counter and

eating an enchilada and tamale and a taco and rice and beans and washing all of this down with Coke.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I left a nice tip on the counter and paid the check and left the restaurant and went over to Components, Inc. It was time now for me to go see Burrell about his watch.

Components, Inc. was on Roeder Avenue.

Burrell's office was on the top floor of the main building of Components, Inc. I walked into it and stopped and looked around. The room I was in now must be the reception room. I saw a girl sitting behind a big blonde desk on the other side of the room and penning her way through some papers. She looked up at me when she heard the door open and saw me come in. Then she smiled at me and spoke to me: "Can I help you?"

"Well, I hope so," I said to her and walked over to her and took my Patrol Insurance investigator ID out of my pocket

and showed it to her and spoke to her again:  
"My name is Rich Chandler. I'm with Patrol  
Insurance, Investigations Division."

"You're an insurance investigator?"

"That's right. I need to talk to Mr.  
Burrell."

"So would everyone else and I," the girl  
told me. "No one has seen or heard from him  
in the past three days. We're wondering  
where he is. *I* tried to find him, but I  
couldn't. Then I called the police and told  
*them* Anson is missing."

"Anson Burrell is missing?" I wondered.



## CHAPTER III

"That's right," the girl confirmed. "Anson is missing. He didn't even call in to tell us why he didn't come to work."

"Uh-huh?"

"I tried to get a hold of him at his place, but there was no answer there. Then I tried to get a hold of him at his girlfriend's place, but there was no answer there. I also went over to both places to find him, but he wasn't at those places. And his girlfriend wasn't at *her* place, either."

"Really."

"Yeah."

"What about other people you and Mr. Burrell know? Have you asked *them* where Mr. Burrell is?"

"Yes, I have. But *they* don't know where he is, either. Then I called the police."

"I take it the police haven't found him since you haven't heard from them or Mr. Burrell himself?"

"No. I haven't. I'm going to have to hire a private detective to help the police find him."

"You won't have to do that. Mr. Burrell is a client of ours. Because of that, *we'll* help the police find him. I came here to talk to him about his pocket watch. He reported it missing."

"Oh, yes. The police were here and talked to him about his watch. So were a couple of people from your insurance company."

"I know. My job is to do a follow up investigation of the theft of the watch. And now we'll have to find Mr. Burrell as well as find his watch. You say you haven't seen or heard from Mr. Burrell in the past three days?"

"That's right."

"And I imagine he must have disappeared sometime after the police and

those people from my insurance company talked to him about his watch."

"Yeah. It looks like he disappeared at that time."

"And if he disappeared at that time, then that would mean that something happened that caused him to disappear at that time. Probably something sudden, unexpected."

The girl wondered about that. Then she spoke: "But what could that have been?"

"I know," I said. "But whatever it was, it must have kept him from telling you or someone else what it was; as for what he's doing right now, maybe he's in some position where he can't tell you or someone else what it is he's doing right now, or he doesn't have time to tell you or someone else what it is he's doing right now. That would explain why you or someone else still hasn't seen or heard from him. What's your name?"

"Lucille Holloway,"

"I take it you're Mr. Burrell's secretary?"

"I am."

"I'm going to have to call my boss and tell him what you told me." Then I took my cell phone out of my pocket and called Patrol and told the operator to connect me to John's office and she did, and when Marla answered, I told her I needed to talk to John. Then she put me in touch with John.

"Rich," he said when he came on. "How are ya?"

"Wondering." Then I told John what Lucille had just told me about Burrell's disappearance.

"What?!" John exclaimed after I had finished.

"That's right," I confirmed. "Burrell has disappeared."

"Well, that's too bad. Now we'll have to help the police find him as well as help the police find his watch."

"I know." Then I told John what Lucille had done to find Burrell, and what the results of that search were.

"I see," John said after I had finished.

"Well, ask her who these people are she talked to about Burrell's disappearance and talk to them about Burrell's disappearance, and I'll find out what I can on *my* end about Burrell's disappearance. We'll have to do a follow up investigation of Burrell's disappearance as well as we'll have to do a follow up investigation of the theft of his watch."

"I know. What about the feelers you put out on Burrell's watch? Have you heard anything coming back from them?"

"No. But I'm still waiting to hear back from them."

"Good."

"Anything else, Rich?"

"No. That's it. Bye."

"Bye." Then John hung up.

So did I. Then I put my cell phone back into my pocket. Then I got out my pen and notebook and asked Lucille for the information that John told me to get from Lucille, and Lucille gave me that

information, and I wrote it down in my notebook. Then I put my hand on Lucille's forearm and spoke to her as gently as I could: "Try not to worry." Then I took one of my cards out of the wallet and gave it to Lucille and spoke to Lucille again: "If you hear from Mr. Burrell, or if he comes back here, or if you think of something else that could help us find Mr. Burrell, let me know."

Lucille looked at my card. Then she looked at me and spoke to me: "I'll do that."

"Good. Well. If there isn't anything else, I must be going."

"No. There's nothing else."

"All right. Bye." Then I left.

I was out here inside the parking lot of Components, Inc. and here inside my sports car now. Recording the conversation about Burrell's disappearance that I had had with Lucille. After I recorded the conversation, I turned my voice recorder off and put it in my pocket, and then I looked at my watch. One sixteen.

I had time to talk to some of these people Lucille had talked to about Burrell's disappearance today. There was no guarantee I'd be able to talk to all of them about Burrell's disappearance today. Because of this, I was going to have to talk to the rest of them tomorrow. So I unlocked my car and got into it and started it up, and then I pulled out of the parking lot and turned onto the street and drove down the street so I could go talk to as many of these people about Burrell's disappearance as I could today.

I found as many of these people today and told them what Lucille had told me about Burrell's disappearance, and asked them what *they* knew about Burrell's disappearance, but they told me they only knew what Lucille had told them about Burrell's disappearance. They didn't know anything more about Burrell's disappearance. Then I gave them my card and told them that if they hear from Burrell,

or if Burrell comes back, or if they think of something that could help me find Burrell, to let me know. Then I left these people so I could go see how many more of these people I could talk to about Burrell's disappearance today, and recorded my conversations I had had with the people I had talked to about Burrell's disappearance on my voice recorder.

It was getting dark when I walked out of Don Hammond's office and over to my car. Don Hammond was a process server, and a friend of Burrell's. I had talked to Don about Burrell's disappearance, but he had told me the same thing about Burrell's disappearance that the other people had told me: Lucille had told them Burrell was missing. But they didn't know anything else about Burrell's disappearance. Then I gave Don my card and told him that if he hears from Burrell, or if Burrell comes back, or if Don thinks of something that could help find me find Burrell, to let me know. Now I looked at my



watch. Four fifty-seven. Since it was getting dark, and I was getting hungry and tired, I decided to resume the investigation tomorrow. What I could do tonight was get something to eat and get some sleep.

When I reached my car, I unlocked it and got into it, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded the conversation I had had with Don about Burrell's disappearance. After I finished recording the conversation, I turned my recorder off and put it back into my pocket. I was starting up my car so I could leave Don's office and go somewhere and get something to eat and then go home when my cell phone rang. I took it out of my pocket and said hello.

"Hello. Rich?"

"Yeah, this is Rich."

"It's John."

"Yeah, John."

"My sources told me something interesting about Burrell: two more people

disappeared at the same time Burrell disappeared."

"What?"

"That's right. Two more people disappeared at the same time Burrell disappeared."

## CHAPTER IV

"Well, who are these two more people who disappeared at the same time Burrell disappeared?" I asked John.

"Burrell's girlfriend and her ex-boyfriend," John answered.

"Burrell's girlfriend and her ex-boyfriend?"

"That's right."

"Well, that's interesting."

"Yes, it is. And we'll need to investigate *their* disappearances to find out what happened to Burrell. Since these two people disappeared at the same time Burrell disappeared, it looks like their disappearances and Burrell's disappearance are connected. But we don't know if all three disappearances are connected to the disappearance of Burrell's watch. Maybe it is.

Maybe it isn't.

"Of course. Maybe all three disappearances have nothing to do with the disappearance of Burrell's watch, or maybe they do have something to do with the disappearance of Burrell's watch. It sounds like all three disappearances occurred after the police and Jim Storch talked to Burrell about his watch."

"Yes, it does,"

"I imagine Burrell's girlfriend is Edith Parker? She works at a money transfer company here in Bellingham?" I remembered Lucille Holloway telling me who Burrell's girlfriend was when John had told me to find out from Lucille who it was she had told about Burrell's disappearance and Lucille had told me who those people were and I had written down in my notebook those people's names and their home and work addresses and their home and work phone numbers and their cell phone numbers; and Burrell's girlfriend was

one of the people that Lucille had told about Burrell's disappearance, and I had written down in my notebook Burrell's girlfriend's name and her home and work addresses and her home and work phone numbers and her cell phone number.

"Why, yes, it is. How did you know Burrell has a girl friend?"

Then I told John how I had found that out.

"I see," John said after I had finished.

Then I took my pen and notebook out of my pocket and spoke to John again: "What does Edith Parker look like?"

John told me and I wrote that information down in my notebook. Then I spoke to John again: "By any chance do you know what kind of car Edith drives? If I have to, I'll find it and search it. Maybe it'll tell us something about Burrell's disappearance."

John told me what kind of car Edith drove, and I wrote *that* information down in my notebook. Then I spoke to John again.

"Who's Edith's ex-boyfriend?"

"His name is Hal Wells. He lives here in Bellingham. He's a draftsman." Then John told me Hal's home and work addresses and home and work and cell phone numbers, and I wrote all of this information down in my notebook. Then I asked John what Hal looked like and John told me and I wrote *that* information down in my notebook. Then I asked John what kind of car Wells drove. "If I have to, I'll find Wells's car and search it. Maybe his car will tell us something about Burrell's disappearance." John told me what kind of car Wells drove, and I wrote *that* information down in my notebook.

"We can look into these disappearances tomorrow," John continued. "It is getting late. And I imagine you're getting tired and hungry and you'd like to get something to eat and get some sleep tonight and resume the investigation tomorrow."

"Yes, I would."

"So would I. And we'll get some dinner and some sleep tonight and resume the investigation tomorrow."

I smiled and spoke to John again: "Thanks, John."

"You're welcome, Rich. Before we call it a day on the investigation, I'd like to know what you found out from any of those other people you talked to about Burrell's disappearance."

I told him who I had talked to about Burrell's disappearance today, and what those people had told me about Burrell's disappearance today.

"I see," John said after I had finished.

Then I told John I was going to talk to the rest of those people about Burrell's disappearance tomorrow.

"Do that as well as we look into those disappearances," John said after I had finished. "Well, I think that's it for tonight. Good night, Rich."

"Good night, John," I said. Then I hung

up and put my cell phone back into my pocket.

John hung up, too.

Then I drove out of the parking lot of Don's office so I could go somewhere and get something to eat and then go home.

I was here at Shrimp Shack right now. It was on the corner of Cornwall Avenue and Chestnut. It was a wonderful seafood place. I had eaten here before. I was sitting at a table and eating fish and chips and washing it down with Coke.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I left a nice tip on the table and paid the check and left the restaurant and went home.

Home was my apartment on Magnolia Street.

I was here at home now. After I had gone back here to my place, I had gotten undressed and had taken a shower and had gotten into my pajamas and slippers. Now I was sitting here inside the living room and watching TV and having a beer and keeping



track of time since I was going to have to turn in early tonight and get up early tomorrow so I could resume the investigation tomorrow.

I felt hungry after a while, so I went into the kitchen and got me a piece of apple pie and put a scoop of French vanilla ice cream on the pie, and then I went back into the living room and sat down in my favorite recliner and ate the pie a la mode and continued watching TV.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I was having another beer and continued watching TV.

At eleven o'clock, I turned the TV off and went into my room and turned on the light, and then I set the alarm clock for a time I wanted to get up in the morning, and then I put my Smith and Wesson .45 on one of the bedside tables, and then I removed my slippers and turned off the light and got into bed and went to sleep.

The next day, I was up early and driving

over to Components, Inc. so I could see if Burrell were at Components, Inc. so I could talk to him. There would be the possibility that Burrell had reappeared, but he or Lucille Holloway or both of them didn't tell me Burrell was back, or, maybe Burrell wouldn't be at Components, Inc. at all. Another reason why I was going over to Components, Inc. was to see how Lucille Holloway was doing.

I was here at Components, Inc. now. Inside the main building of Components, Inc. and walking into Burrell's office. This time Lucille Holloway was standing here inside the reception room of Burrell's office and standing at the coffee maker and pouring herself a new cup of coffee. She was tall, plump, had long, thick black hair, blue eyes, a creamy pallor complexion, high cheekbones, thick red lips, and she was wearing a long sleeve red shirt with black piping, blue jeans, and black tennis shoes.

She looked at me when she heard the

door open and saw me come in.

"Good morning," I said to her. "Ms Holloway, I'm Rich Chandler. We've met before?"

"Yes, we have," Lucille said. "I remember. You're from Patrol Insurance, Investigations Division. You came over here to Components, Inc. to talk to Anson about his watch, but I told you he disappeared."

"That's right."

"Well, I still haven't seen or heard from Anson, and he hasn't come back here, and I still haven't heard anything about him. But I promise you, the moment I see or hear from him, or if he comes back here, or if I hear anything about him, I'll tell you."

Lucille just told me what I needed to know about Burrell. Because of that, I wasn't going to have to do one of the two things that I had come here to Components, Inc. to do. Now there was the other thing that I had come here to Components, Inc. to do. I spoke to Lucille again: "I remember your

saying that, and I'm sure you will, but I'd like to know how you're doing."

Lucille smiled. Then she spoke to me: "Fine. Considering,"

"Well, that's nice. If there's anything you need, just let me know."

"I'll do that."

"Good. Well. I gotta get going. Got an investigation to conduct." Then I left.

I was out here inside the parking lot of Components, Inc. and here inside my car now. I looked at my watch. Ten forty- three.

I had time to call Burrell at his place. Maybe he had gone back there, but no one knew it. I took my notebook out of my pocket and looked up Burrell's home phone number, and then I took my cell phone out of my pocket and dialed Burrell's home phone number. Then I got an answering machine announcement saying he wasn't there, but I could leave a message. I didn't leave a message, though. Instead, I hung up after I heard the beep. Then I decided to go

over to his place and see if he's there and talk to him about his watch and why he had disappeared. Or, if he weren't there, I could search his place. I would need to do that. So I put my cell phone back into my pocket, and then I looked up Burrell's home address and found it, and then I put my notebook back into my pocket and started up the car, and then I drove out of the parking lot of Components, Inc. and turned onto the street and drove down the street and over to Burrell's place.

Burrell's place was on James Street. It was a white one story rectangular house with a forest green roof and a matching garage attached to the house.

When I got here, I parked my car across the street from Burrell's place and got out of my car and locked it, and then I ran across the street and up to the front door of Burrell's place and knocked on the door. No answer. Then I knocked on the door again. Again no answer. Then I knocked on the

door one more time. Again, no answer. Then I turned the knob on the door. The door was locked. Then, I looked around to make sure no one was going to see me sneak into Burrell's place. No one did. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and picked the lock of the front door of Burrell's place and opened the door and stepped inside his place and closed and locked the door and put my lock pick set back into my pocket. Then I started to walk through the place so I could search it.

I was peeking out the front door of Burrell's place now to see if the coast were clear or not. I had searched Burrell's place and had bugged it in case Burrell would come back here to his place, and had tapped his landline phone here at his place in case someone would call Burrell at his place, and what he wants to talk to Burrell about may have to do with Burrell's disappearance or

the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both. Now it was time for me to sneak out of Burrell's place and back into my car and go somewhere and record what I had found here at Burrell's place.

The coast was clear. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I stepped out of Burrell's place and closed and locked the door, and then I ran across the street and unlocked my car and got into it, and then I started up the car and drove away from Burrell's place without speeding so I won't be noticed.

When I got as far away from Burrell's place as I could, I pulled up to the curb in front of someone's place and parked my car here and took my gloves off and put them back into my pocket and got out my voice recorder and recorded what I had found at Burrell's place: nothing. Although his car wasn't in his garage. That told me something: Burrell must have gone somewhere in his car when he had disappeared. After I recorded what I had

discovered at Burrell's place, I turned my recorder off and put it back into my pocket. Then I got out my notebook and looked up Burrell's cell phone number. I found it and put my notebook back into my pocket, and then I got out *my* cell phone and dialed Burrell's cell phone number. All I got was an answering machine announcement. I didn't leave a message, though. Then I put *my* cell phone back into my pocket and looked at my watch. Ten fifty-one.

I had time to call Edith Parker at her place and at work to see if maybe she were at either place so I could talk to her about Burrell's disappearance and about the disappearance of his watch. She could have reappeared at either one of *those* places. But if she weren't going to be at those places, or if she weren't going to be at one of them, I was going to have to search both places or one of them. I got out my cell phone and tried to get a hold of her at work. No answer. Then I hung up and put my cell phone back



into my pocket and took my notebook out of my pocket and looked for Edith's work address. I found it and looked at it. Then I put my notebook back into my pocket and started up the car and pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street without speeding so I won't be noticed.

Transferral was on Orleans Street.

When I got here, I parked my car across the street from Transferral and got out of it and locked it, and as I went over to Pace, I looked around to see if Edith's car were here. I would want to search that if it *were* here. I didn't see it here.

When I reached Transferral, I saw the sign on the door. It said Transferral was closed. But that was all it said. It didn't say how long Edith was going to be gone or when she was coming back. It only said that Transferral was closed. I looked around to make sure no one was going to see me sneak into Transferral and search the place. No one did. Then, as

quickly and silently as I could, I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then, as quickly and silently as I could, I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and picked the lock on the front door of Transferral and snuck into Transferral and closed and locked the door.

I was peeking out the door of Transferral now to see if the coast were clear or not before I sneak out of Transferral and back to my car and get into it and go somewhere and record what I had found here at Transferral. I had also bugged Transferral in case Edith would come back here to Transferral, and I had tapped the landline phone here at Transferral in case someone would call Transferral and wanted to talk to Edith about something that would have to do with Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of Burrell's watch, or, one or the other.

The coast *was* clear. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I unlocked the door and

stepped out of Transferral and closed and locked the door. Then I walked away from Transferral and crossed the street to go back to my car. Along the way, I looked around to see if maybe Edith's car were here now. If it *would* be here now, I could search it. It wasn't here.

When I got back to *my* car, I unlocked it and got into it, and then I started it up and drove away from Transferral so I could get as far away from Transferral as I could before I record what I had discovered at Transferral.

When I got here to a store here on Woburn Street, I pulled into the parking lot of the store and parked my car here. Then I took my gloves off and put them into my pocket, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had found at Transferral: nothing. Which meant that Edith must have locked up the place before she had disappeared. But there was no sign on her place of business that said where she was going to be and how long she

was going to be at that place. Which meant that she went to a place that she didn't want anyone to know about, and she didn't want anyone to know how long she was going to be at that place. After I finished recording what I had discovered at Transferral, I turned my recorder off and put it back into my pocket, and then I took my notebook out of my pocket and looked up Edith's home phone number. Then I got out my cell phone and tried to get a hold of Edith at home. All I got was an answering machine announcement saying she wasn't at home, but she wanted a message left. I didn't leave a message, though. Instead, I hung up and looked in my notebook again for Edith's home address. I found it and looked at it. Then I put my notebook back into my pocket and started up my car, and then I drove out of the parking lot and turned onto the street and drove down it so I could go over to Edith's place and see if she's there and talk to her about Burrell's disappearance

and about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or about Burrell's disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch. There would be the possibility that Edith had gone back to her place. But if I discover that Edith wasn't going to be at home, I was going to search her place.

Her place was on Indian Street. It was an apartment.

When I got here, I parked my car across the street from Edith's place, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I walked across the street and looked around for Edith's car as I went to Edith's place. Maybe her car would be here. I didn't see it. And I didn't see it in her designated parking space, either.

When I reached Edith's place, I knocked on the door. No answer. I knocked on the door again. Again no answer. Then I knocked on the door one time more. Again, no answer. Then I twisted the knob on her door. The door was locked. Then, I looked

around to make sure on one was going to see me sneak into Edith's place and search it. No one did. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and picked the lock of the front door of Edith's place and opened the door and stepped into her place and closed and locked the door. Then I put my lock pick set back into my pocket and started to move through the place so I could search it.

I was peeking out the front door of Edith's place now to see if the coast were clear before I sneak out of Edith's place and into my car and leave Edith's place and go somewhere and record what I had found at Edith's place. I had also bugged Edith's place in case she would come back here, and I had also tapped her landline phone here at her place in case someone would call her here at her place and talk to her about something that would have to do with Burrell's

disappearance or the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both.

The coast was clear. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I stepped out of Edith's place and closed and locked the door, and then I walked away from Edith's place instead of run away from it so I won't be noticed.

As I walked back to my car so I could get into it and leave and go somewhere and record what I had discovered at Edith's place, I looked around to see if Edith's car were here now. If it would be, I could search it. It wasn't here. It wasn't in her designated parking space, and it wasn't anywhere else near her place, either.

When I got to *my* car, I unlocked it and got into it, and then I started it up and pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street so I could get as far away from Edith's place as I could and go somewhere and record what I had discovered at Edith's place.

When I got here to a store here on Byron Street, I pulled into the parking lot of a store and parked my car here and took my gloves off and put them back into my pocket, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had discovered at Edith's place: nothing. And her car wasn't at her place. Just like it wasn't at work. I thought about that: if her car weren't at work, and it wasn't at her place, then that would mean that she went somewhere in her car when she had disappeared. Just like Burrell had done when *he* had disappeared. I turned my recorder off after I had finished recording what I had discovered at Edith's place, and then I put my recorder back into my pocket, and then I got out my notebook and looked up Edith's cell phone number. I found it, and then I put my notebook back into my pocket, and then I took *my* cell phone out of my pocket and dialed Edith's cell phone number. No answer there. All I got was an answering machine



announcement. I didn't leave a message, though. Then I hung up and put my cell phone back into my pocket and looked at my watch. Eleven forty-five. Exactly.

I had fifteen minutes before lunch time. People who work usually have lunch at noon. And I was getting hungry, so I might as well eat before I continue the investigation. I had the chance to do it. Then I decided where to have lunch and went there.

I was here at McDonald's right now. McDonald's was on Samish Way. I had eaten here at McDonald's before. I liked the place. I was sitting here at a table and eating a double meat cheeseburger and fries and drinking a Coke and a chocolate shake.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I was having another Coke. I thought I'd have another Coke before I resume the investigation; I also took my time drinking the Coke and kept track of time.

After I finished the Coke, I left

McDonald's and got into my car and took my notebook out of my pocket and looked for Edith's ex-boyfriend Hal Wells's work address and work phone number and found them. Then I took my cell phone out of my pocket and tried to get a hold of him at work. No answer. Then I put my cell phone and notebook back into my pocket and stared up my car and drove away from McDonald's and over to where Wells worked to see if Wells were at work and talk to him about Burrell's disappearance and about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or one or the other. But if he weren't going to be at work, I was going to search his office.

His office was on Kentucky Street.

When I got here, I parked my car across the street from his office, and then I got out of the car and locked it, and then I walked across the street and looked around to see if Wells's car were here. Maybe I could search that as well as see if Wells were at work so I could talk to him about Burrell's

disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both, or search his office if he weren't going to be at his office. His car wasn't here.

When I reached his office, I noticed the sign on the door of his office said his office was closed. It didn't say anything else. Like where he was now and how long he was going to be there and when he was coming back. It only said that the office was closed. Then I twisted the knob of the door. The door was locked. Then, I looked around to make sure no one was going to see me sneak into Wells's office and search it. No one saw me. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and picked the lock of the front door of Wells's office and opened the door and stepped into his office and closed and locked the door. Then I put my lock pick set back into my pocket and started to walk through the place to search it.

I was peeking out the front door of Wells's office to see if the coast were clear or not before I sneak out of Wells's office and back into my car and go somewhere and record what I had found here at Wells's office. I had also bugged Wells's office in case Wells would come back here to his office, and I had also tapped his landline phone here at his office in case someone would call him and talk to him about something that would have to do with Burrell's disappearance, or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch, or both.

The coast *was* clear. So, as quickly and silently, as I could, I stepped out of Wells's office and closed and locked the door, and then I walked away from Wells's office instead of run away from Wells's office so I won't be noticed.

As I walked back to my car, I looked around to see if Wells's car would be here now. If it *would* be here now, I could search it. It wasn't here.

When I reached *my* car, I unlocked it and got into it, and then I started it up and drove away from Wells's office without speeding so I won't be noticed.

When I was as far away from Wells's office as I could get, I pulled up to a curb in front of someone's place and parked my car here. Then I took my gloves off and put them into my pocket. Then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had found at Wells's office: nothing. And his car wasn't at work. Which meant that he had closed up his office for some reason and went home or somewhere else in his car. And there was no sign on the door of his office saying how long his office was going to be closed and where he was now and why he was there and when he was coming back. After I finished recording what I had discovered at Wells's office, I turned the recorder off and put it back into my pocket. Then I took my notebook out of my pocket and looked up Wells's home phone

number and found it and took my cell phone out of my pocket and tried to get a hold of Wells at his place. No answer. All I got was an answering machine. But I didn't leave a message on his answering machine, Instead, I hung up and put my cell phone back into my pocket, and then I looked up Wells's home address so I could go over to his place and see if he were there and talk to him about Burrell's disappearance, or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch, or both. There would be the possibility that Wells had gone back to his place. But if he weren't going to be at his place, I was going to search it. I found Wells's home address, and then I put my notebook back into my pocket and started up my car and pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street so I could go over to Wells's home.

Wells's home was on Sunset Drive. It was a nice long white one story house with an adobe red roof and a matching garage.

When I got here, I parked my car across

the street from his place, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I walked across the street and looked around for Wells's car as I walked over to Wells's place. Maybe I could search his car while I was here. Even though his car would be in his garage since he did have a garage. I didn't see his car here around outside his place.

When I got here to Wells's place, I knocked on the front door of Wells's place. No answer. Then I knocked on his door again. Again no answer. Then I knocked on his door one more time. Again, no answer. Then I twisted the knob of his door. The door was locked. Then I looked around to make sure no one was going to see me sneak into Wells's place and search it. No one did. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I took my gloves out of my pocket and put them on, and then I took my lock pick set out of my pocket and picked the lock of the front door of Wells's place, and then I opened the door and stepped into the house

and closed and locked the door. Then I put my lock pick set back into my pocket and moved through the house so I could search it.

I came to what looked like Wells's study now. I had searched some other rooms of Wells's place, but I hadn't found anything inside them that could tell me about Burrell's disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both. Now I stepped into what looked like Wells's study and stood inside the room and my eyes scanned the room. The room that looked like Wells's study was small, but spacious, and the walls were light green, and the carpet was burgundy, and the desk was big and made of rosewood, and surrounding the desk were a phone and an answering machine and a computer and a TV and DVR and VCR and DVD player and matching rosewood armchairs. I went over to the desk and sat down behind it and looked through the drawers. But so far I didn't find anything



that could me about Burrell's disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both. Then I discovered something interesting about the bottom drawer as I looked through it: the bottom of the drawer felt loose. It didn't feel solid. It felt like it hadn't been nailed down. I wondered about this. Then I took the contents of the drawer out of the drawer and put them on the top of the desk, and then I saw if the bottom of the drawer could be removed. It could be. All I had to do was put my fingernail into the crevice between the bottom of the drawer and the walls of the drawer. I did that. Then the piece of wood came out of the drawer, and then I put the piece of wood on the top of Wells's desk, and then I looked down into the drawer. Then, I saw something. It was on the bottom of the real bottom of the drawer. It was a square envelope. I took it out, and then I looked inside the envelope. Then I saw a disc inside the envelope. I took it out of the envelope to take a better look at the

disc. I didn't see anything written on the disc. I wondered about this. So I turned on the computer and put the disc into the tray of the computer to see what was on the disc. Then, I stopped suddenly and looked. My gaze became fixed. I sat erect. My eyes widened.

## CHAPTER V

On the disc was information on Burrell. Criminal information. Information on crimes that Burrell had committed information on crimes that Burrell was going to commit.

As quickly as I could, I looked to see if Wells had some unused discs so I could copy what I saw on *this* disc about Burrell. I wasn't going to have time to read everything on the disc right now, so I was going to have to improvise and copy the information and take the copied information somewhere else and read it there after I was done here at Wells's place. Because I couldn't be here at Wells's place any longer than I was supposed to be here. I could only be here at Wells's place just long enough to search it and bug it and tap the landline phone here.

In other words, time was working against

me.

I found an unused disc and copied the information onto the unused disc, and then I put the original disc back into its envelope, and then I turned off the computer and put the copied information I now had on Burrell into my pocket, and then I put the original disc back where I had found it and put the false bottom of the drawer back over the disc, and then I put the contents of the drawer back on the false bottom of the drawer, and then I closed the drawer and looked around the room that looked like the study. But I didn't find anything here that could tell me about Burrell's disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both. Then I put a bug underneath the knee hole of the desk in case Wells would come back here to his place, and then I tapped the phone in case someone would call Wells and talk to Wells about something that would have to do with Burrell's disappearance or the disappearance of

Burrell's watch or both. Then I left the study and went into the other rooms I hadn't searched and searched them. But I didn't find anything inside *these* rooms that could tell me about Burrell's disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both.

I was here inside Wells's garage right now. His car wasn't here, though. I searched his garage. But I didn't find anything here that could tell me about Burrell's disappearance or about the disappearance of Burrell's watch or both. Then I put a bug underneath the bench here inside Wells's garage, and then I peeked out the door of Wells's garage to see if the coast were clear before I sneak out of Wells's garage and back to my car and get into it and leave and go somewhere and record what I had discovered here at Wells's place.

The coast *was* clear. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I stepped out of the door of the garage and closed and locked it, and

then I walked away from Wells's place instead of running away from Wells's place so I won't be noticed and crossed the street and looked around to see if Wells's car were here anywhere around Wells's place. Even though it wouldn't be since Wells would keep his car inside his garage. But, just in case. I would want to search if it would be here around his place now. It wasn't here around his place.

When I reached *my* car, I unlocked it and got into it, and then I drove away from Wells's place without speeding so I won't be noticed.

When I was as far away from Wells's place as I needed to be, I turned onto one of the streets of a residential area and pulled up to the nearest curb and parked my car in front of someone's place and took my gloves off and put them back into my pocket, and then I took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had discovered at Wells's place: nothing. I also thought

about Wells's car not being at his place. He must have gone somewhere in his car when he had disappeared.

And then there was this on information on Burrell. I took the disc the copied information on Burrell was on out of my pocket and looked at it and wondered about it. What if this information on Burrell had to do with Burrell's disappearance? Or what if it had to do with the disappearance of his watch? Or what if it had to with both Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of Burrell's watch? I was going to have to find out which. And I was going to have to find out why Wells had this information on Burrell, too. But I wasn't going to be able to find out these things here. So I started up the car and drove back to Patrol.

I was here at Patrol now. Sitting here inside my office and putting into the tray of my computer the disc the copied information on Burrell was on so I could

read the information.

I was reading the information now. And there was a long list of crimes that Burrell had committed, and a long list of crimes that Burrell was going to commit.

After I read the information, I took the disc out of the tray of my computer and put it back into its envelope and closed the tray of my computer and thought: Wells had this information on Burrell.

Somehow Wells had found out that Burrell had committed these crimes and he was going to commit the other crimes and got the information on these crimes and put this information on a disc and hid the disc so no one would find it--not even Burrell. And if Wells had gotten this information on Burrell and had hidden it from Burrell or someone else or both, then that would mean that Wells was going to use this information against Burrell. Probably to blackmail Burrell into doing something. Or maybe he was going to give this information to someone



else who wanted to use this information against Burrell for some reason. Maybe *that* person wanted to blackmail Burrell into doing something for him.

And then there was something else: what if this information that Wells had discovered and had obtained and had hidden had to do with his disappearance and Burrell's disappearance and Edith Parker's disappearance? It would explain all three disappearances. All three people had disappeared because of this information.

After I thought about Wells's having this information on Burrell, and out of curiosity, I got on the computer to find out if Wells and Burrell and Edith Parker had criminal records. All three of them didn't. Which meant that if anyone or two of them or all three of them had criminal information on them, they managed to keep this information secret. They didn't want anyone to know about this information. I opened up the tray of my computer and took out of the

envelope the disc with the information on Burrell, and then I put the disc into the tray of the computer, and then I closed the tray of the computer and saw the information on Burrell appear on the monitor. Then I printed out this information on Burrell, and then I opened up the tray of my computer and took the disc out of the tray, and then I closed up the tray and put the disc back into its envelope, and then I turned my computer off and put the information on Burrell I had printed out into the Burrell case file, and then I picked up the receiver of my phone and called John's office. I was going to need to tell John what I had found out in the Burrell case so far. When Marla answered, I told her what I needed to do, and then she put me in touch with John.

When John came on, I told *him* what I needed to do.

I was here inside John's office now. Sitting in front of John's desk and John was sitting behind his desk and I told John what I

had found out in the Burrell case so far. Now John and I were sitting behind his desk and reading the information on Burrell.

"Well, that's very interesting," John said after he and I had finished reading the information and John removed the disc from the tray of *his* computer and gave it back to me and I put the disc back into its envelope.

"Yes, it is," I said.

"Well, if Wells found out about this information on Burrell and obtained it and hid it, and he wanted to blackmail Burrell with this information, then why would he want to blackmail Burrell?"

"That's a good question--if he were going to blackmail Burrell into doing something. Or maybe he was going to give this information to someone else so *that* person could blackmail Burrell into doing something. If so, what was *that* person going to blackmail Burrell into doing? But my guess is that because of Wells discovering this information, and the way he obtained it

and hid it, his disappearance and Burrell's disappearance and Edith Parker's disappearance have something to do with the information. All three of them did disappear at the same time."

"And so did their cars. Which meant that they went somewhere in their cars when they disappeared, and they must have gone somewhere that has to do with this information."

"It has to be."

"But where could they have gone to that has to do with this information?"

"I don't know. But at the moment what we have are three people who disappeared at the same time, and there's criminal information on one of these people. I imagine you've been keeping in touch with Missing Persons to find out what you can about Burrell's disappearance and Edith Parker's disappearance and Wells's disappearance?"

"I have. But Missing Persons told me that

no report was filed on Edith Parker's disappearance and Wells's disappearance. Only a report was filed on Burrell's disappearance."

"Well, that's interesting . . . Unless perhaps no one noticed their disappearances. Edith Parker is the only one who works at Transferral. And Wells is the only one who works at his office. Which means they wouldn't be missed if they *did* disappear. And they must not have talked to anyone before they disappeared, either. If so, no one would know where they are now."

"Of course."

"I take it Missing Persons is still looking for Burrell?"

"Yeah, they are."

"Well, I tapped Burrell's landline phone at home and bugged his home after I searched his home, and I tapped Wells's landline phone at home and at work and bugged his office and his home after I searched his home and his office, and I

tapped Edith Parker's landline phone at home and at work and bugged the place she works at and her home, so if any of them go back to those places, we'll know."

"Of course."

"I haven't searched Burrell's office and bugged it and tapped his phone there, but I will. So if he goes back to his office, we'll know."

"Of course. But you'd better not go over to Components, Inc. and search Burrell's office and tap his phone there as Rich Chandler, investigator for Patrol Insurance, Investigations Division. If you do, you might tip off someone, or more than one person, who's in on Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of his watch and car, and Wells's disappearance and the disappearance of *his* car, and Edith Parker's disappearance and the disappearance of *her* car. They might think that you'll find out about these disappearances, or you *have* found out about these disappearances, and if one of these

things happens, they'll disappear themselves. Because of that, go search Burrell's office and tap his phone there as someone else and try not to be seen searching it and tapping his phone there."

"I'll do that."

"And I'll tell Missing Persons about what you discovered."

"Good. I find this interesting: Hal Wells, Edith Parker's ex-boyfriend, finds, obtains, and hides criminal information on Edith Parker's new boyfriend, Anson Burrell. Now maybe he discovered this information by accident, then put it on computer disc and hid the disc, or maybe he was looking for this information deliberately and found it and put it on computer disc and hid it. If he were looking for this information deliberately and found it and put it on computer disc and hid it, then that would mean that Wells was going to blackmail Burrell into doing something. Or he *has* blackmailed Burrell into doing something.

One of the two. If he had blackmailed Burrell into doing something, or he's going to blackmail Burrell into doing something, then why did he blackmail Burrell into doing something, or why *is* he going to blackmail Burrell into doing something?"

"Those are very interesting questions. And I think the way to get the answer to one of those questions is to investigate Wells as we continue looking for him and his car and Edith Parker and *her* car and Burrell and *his* car and his watch."

"Yeah."

"Yeah." Then John looked at the digital alarm clock on his desk. Two thirty-six. Then he looked at me again and spoke to me again: "But we can do that and the other things in the investigation tomorrow. It *is* getting late. And I would hate doing things like this late in the day."

"I understand."

"What *you* can do today is get ready to go over to Components, Inc. and search



Burrell's office and tap his phone there the way I suggested: by getting a rental car and making a disguise. You will have time to do *those* two things today."

I looked at John's clock on his desk. Two thirty-eight. Then I spoke to John again: "You're right, I do."

"And after you've done those things, take the rest of the day off and get something to eat and get some sleep for what you have to do tomorrow."

"I'll do that."

"And after you do what you have to do tomorrow, you can continue doing the other things in the investigation."

"Of course."

"And I'll tell Missing Persons what you found out today, and then I'll take the rest of the day off and get something to eat and some sleep for what we need to do tomorrow."

"Of course. Anything else, John?"

"Yeah. Duplicate that information on

Burrell and give it to me and leave *your* copy of the information in your office before you leave."

"All right" Then I left John's office and went back to *my* office and got on the computer and duplicated that information on Burrell, and then I took the disc out of the tray of my computer and closed the tray and turned off the computer, and then I put my copy of the information on Burrell in one of the drawers of my desk and locked the drawer, and then I collected the other copy of the information on Burrell and left my office and went back to *John's* office and gave *him* the other copy of the information on Burrell.

"I just talked told Missing Persons what you found out in the investigation so far," John told me after I gave him the other copy of the information on Burrell. "And they're going to help us look for Burrell and his watch and his car, and Edith Parker and *her* car, and Wells and *his* car."

"Great. Well, if there isn't anything else, I'll get started on what you want me to do today."

"No, there isn't. See ya later, Rich."

"See ya later, John." Then I left and took my cell phone out of my pocket and called a cab company I had done business with before and asked them to take me from Patrol to a car rental agency I had done business with before.

I was here at that car rental agency now. After I ordered my car, the girl at the counter gave me the keys to the car and told me what kind of car I was going to drive, and then I stepped out of the car rental agency and looked for and found the kind of rental car I was going to drive: a brown Impala with white hard top. I got into it and started it up, and then I drove away from the car rental agency and back to my place.

I was here at my place now. Inside my make-up room and making a disguise for one of the ways I was going to go over to

Components, Inc. and search Burrell's office and bugged it and tap his phone there.

After I made the disguise, I put the disguise into one of the drawers of my make-up table and locked the drawer. I was going to need to keep the disguise locked up until I used it. Then I looked at the digital alarm clock on my desk. It told me it was four o-one now.

I was getting hungry. Then I decided where I wanted to eat at. I was in the mood to eat out. Then I stepped out of my make-up room and locked the door, and then I went into the living room and picked up the receiver of my landline phone and called the same cab company I had done business with and told them where I was and where I wanted to go. Then the dispatcher told me the cab will be here at my place in a few moments, and then we hung up, and then I went outside my place and looked it and waited for the cab here. I was going to have the cab take me to the restaurant I wanted

to go to. I didn't want me, Rich Chandler, investigator for Patrol Insurance, Investigations Division, to be seen in the Impala. Instead, I only wanted Paul Tynen to be seen in the Impala. I had left *my* car at Patrol after I had gotten the Impala and had driven it back here to my place.

## CHAPTER VI

The next day, I was here inside the parking lot of Components, Inc. In my disguise as Paul Tynen and inside the rental car from the car rental agency I had done business with before. Paul Tynen had salt and pepper hair and a matching mustache and tanned skin. I was watching the main building of Components, Inc. to see when Lucille Holloway was going to come out of the building and go to lunch. And after she goes to lunch, I was going to sneak into Burrell's office and search it and bug it and tap the phone there and then sneak out of Burrell's office.

Then I saw Lucille walking out of the building and towards the parking lot. She was wearing a gray overcoat and a blue dress

and black high heel shoes, and the strap of her shineless brown shoulder strap handbag was resting on her right shoulder, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her shoulder.

When she reached the parking lot of Components, Inc., she walked into it and walked over to her light blue Rambler and unlocked it and got into it and closed the door, and then she started up her car and drove out of the parking lot and turned onto the street and drove down the street. Then / got out of *my* car and locked it, and then / walked out of the parking lot and onto the premises of Components, Inc. and to the main building of Components, Inc. instead of running over to the main building so I won't be noticed and went into the main building.

I was walking away from the main building of Components, Inc. instead of running away from the building so I won't be noticed now. I had snuck into Burrell's office

and had searched it and had bugged it and had tapped the landline phone there, and then I had snuck out of Burrell's office and walked out of the building. Now I was walking toward the parking lot to go into the parking lot and get into my car and leave Components, Inc. and go somewhere else and get out of my disguise secretly and return my rental car, and then do the other things in the investigation that John and I had talked about.

I was driving away from Components, Inc. now. I looked into the rear- and side mirrors of my car to see if I were being followed. I was pretty sure I wasn't being followed, but, just in case. I didn't see anyone following me. Which meant that no one was following me because they didn't know I had snuck into Burrell's office had searched it and had bugged it and had tapped the landline phone there, or they did know that I had snuck into Burrell's office and had searched it and had bugged it and



had tapped the phone there, but they were staying out of sight while they were following me so I won't see their following me. Which I thought was unlikely. No one could know I had snuck into Burrell's office and had searched it and had bugged it and had tapped the landline phone there since I *was* in disguise, *and*, driving another car and not my own.

The reason why I needed to see if anyone *were* following me was so I could lose them before I record what I had done and had found at Burrell's office, and before I get out of my disguise, and before I return my rental car, and before I do the other things in the investigation that John and I had talked about.

When I saw the first street of a residential area, I turned into it and looked for and found a place to park and record and pulled my car up to the curb in front of someone's place and parked my car here and got out my voice recorder and recorded what

I discovered inside Burrell's office: nothing. Nothing that could tell me about his disappearance and about the disappearance of his watch and his car, and, about the criminal information Wells had on him--if Burrell knew about the information, and, about Wells's disappearance and the disappearance of *his* car, and, about Edith Parker's disappearance, and, about the disappearance of Edith Parker's car. Either there was no information on these things, or, there *was* information on these things and Burrell was keeping it somewhere else. It wasn't at his place, and it wasn't at Edith Parker's place of business and where she lived, and it wasn't at Wells's place of business, though, since I had searched those places and had discovered nothing at those places. So it had to be somewhere else--if there were information on these things. After I recorded what I had discovered at Burrell's office, I turned my recorder off and put it back into my pocket, and then I

started up my rental car and pulled away from the curb so I could go somewhere and get out of my disguise secretly, and then go return the rental car.

I looked around for a good place to remove my disguise secretly, and I found it, and then I pulled into the gas station and parked my car close to the men's room, and then I got out of the car and locked it, and then I went into the men's room and noticed that no one else was inside the men's room, and then I locked the door and looked into the mirror above the wash basin and removed my disguise of Paul Tynen. Then I put the disguise into my pocket, and then I left the men's room and got back into the car and started it up, and then I pulled out of the gas station and turned into the street and drove down it so I could go back to the car rental agency I had done business with before and return my rental car.

I was here at the car rental agency now. I parked the rental car here in front of the car

rental agency building, and then I went into the building and returned the keys to the car and paid for the use of the car. Then I left the building and looked at my watch. Twelve forty-nine.

I had time to eat lunch before I continued the investigation, so I walked around and looked around for a good place to eat at. I found it and went into it. Now I was here inside Diamond Jim's Grill and sitting at a booth and eating bacon and scrambled eggs and hash browns and washing all of this down with coffee and orange juice.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I left a nice tip on the table and paid the check and left the restaurant and got my cell phone and called the cab company I had done business with before and told the dispatcher I wanted to go to Patrol. Then the dispatcher told me the cab will be here in a few moments, and then the dispatcher and I hung up. After that, I stood outside

Diamond Jim's Grill and waited for the cab. Then I called Patrol and told the operator to put me in touch with John and she did. When Marla answered, I told her I needed to talk to John, but then she told me that John was in a meeting right now. Then I told Marla to tell John what I had done and had discovered at Burrell's office and what I was going to do at my place. Then we hung up, and then I put my cell phone back into my pocket.

The cab came and took me to Patrol.

When I got here to Patrol, the cab pulled into the parking lot of Patrol and came to a complete stop at *my* car, and then I paid the cab driver and got out of the cab, and then the cab driver left, and *I* unlocked *my* car and got into it and started it up and drove back to my place. And when I was going to get to my place, I was going to think about how I could investigate Wells as well as do the other things in the investigation to find out why Wells, Edith Parker's ex-boyfriend,

would blackmail Burrell, Edith Parker's new boyfriend, or, if he *were* going to blackmail Burrell. There had to be a reason. And I wanted to think about how I could investigate Wells as well as do the other things in the investigation to find out why Wells, Edith Parker's ex-boyfriend, would blackmail Burrell, Edith Parker's new boyfriend, or, if he *were* going to blackmail Burrell at my place.

I was here at my place now. I had made a pot of coffee after I had gotten back here to my place. Now I was sitting here inside my living room and watching TV and sipping coffee while I was thinking about how I could investigate Wells.

My landline phone rang. I picked up the receiver and said hello.

"Hello. Rich?"

"Yeah, this is Rich."

"This is John. I got your message about what you did and discovered at Burrell's office and what you're doing at your place."

"Well, I'm afraid that's what I found at Burrell's office: nothing." Then I told John the theory I had about finding nothing at Burrell's office.

"Makes sense," John said after I had finished.

"Yeah, it does. And after I searched his office, I bugged it and tapped the landline phone there."

"Good."

"But I haven't heard anything going on at his office after I bugged it; but I'm still listening in on his office."

"Good. Another reason why I called was to let you know that the police and our people found Wells's car."

"You what?"

"That's right. The police and our people found Wells's car."

"Where?"

"Inside the parking lot of a grocery store on Meridian Street; it's still there. A person who works at the store collected some carts

and parked them in front of the store, and then he saw this woman drive into the parking lot of the store and park the car inside the parking lot of the store. Then he saw the woman get out of the car and walk away from it and walk out of the parking lot and walk away from the store."

"What?"

"That's what the employee saw the woman do. Then the employee told his boss what he saw the woman do, and then his boss called the police and told *them* what the employee saw the woman do, and then the police called us and told *us* what the employee saw the woman do. Then the police went over to the store and searched the car and interrogated the employee who saw what the woman did. The employee told the police what the woman looked like, and then the police ran a composite on check on her and found out who she is: Edith Parker."

"Edith Parker."

"That's right."



"Well, that's interesting."

"Yes, it is. The police didn't find anything inside the car."

"Which means that maybe there *wasn't* anything inside the car that could tell us why Edith Parker drove Wells's car into the parking lot of the store and parked the car inside the parking lot and walked away from the car and left the store, or, maybe there was something inside the car that could tell us why Edith Parker drove Wells's car into the parking lot and parked the car there and walked away from the car and left the store, and she removed the something from the car so we won't find it. And maybe her driving the car into the parking lot of the store and parking it there and waking away from it and leaving the store has to do with her disappearance and the disappearance of *her* car and Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of *his* car and his watch and the criminal information on Burrell and Wells's disappearance and the disappearance

of *his* car. There is that possibility."

"Yes, there is. The police found the keys to Wells's car underneath the mat on the floor of the front seat of the car."

"Well, that tells us something: she must have put the keys underneath the mat after she parked the car in the parking lot so she won't have the keys on her. If she would have the keys on her, she'd have to explain why she drove the car into the parking lot of the store and parked the car in the parking lot and walked away from the car and left the store."

"But why would she drive Wells's car into the parking lot of the store and park the car there and walk away from the car and leave the store?"

"That's a very interesting question. When did the employee see Edith Parker drive Wells's car into the parking lot of the store and park the car in the parking lot and walk away from the car and leave the store?"

"Sometime before you discovered that

information on Burrell that Wells has and before I told Missing Persons about that information."

"I see. And possibly or probably right around the time that Burrell and his watch and his car and Edith Parker and her car and Wells and his car disappeared, too. Did the employee see what the woman did after he saw her drive the car into the parking lot and park it there and walk away from the car and leave the parking lot?"

"No. Not even after he told his boss what he saw the woman do and then he and his boss went and saw the car and before the employee's boss called the police."

"Which means that the woman must have disappeared in that area so she wouldn't be seen leaving the store. And then she may have called a cab to take her to *her* car, and when the cab took her to her car, she paid the cab driver, got out of the cab and watched the cab driver leave to make sure the cab driver wouldn't see what she

was going to do at *that* destination, and when the cab driver was completely out of her sight, she went back to *her* car and got into it and drove to her final destination. But my guess is that that final destination is the place that she and Burrell and Wells had disappeared to and not her place or Burrell's place or Wells's place."

"Well, we thought of that, too, so we found out what cab company took Edith Parker to her second to her last destination from that cross street she was waiting at." Then John told me what that second to the last destination was that Edith Parker had gone to. Then John spoke to me again: "We found out that that street is next to the street Burrell lives on."

My gaze became fixed. "Really," I then said.

"Yeah," John said.

"Well, that's interesting."

"Yes. It is."

Then, I thought. Then I spoke to John

again: "That could be it: Edith Parker went to Burrell's place because *her* car was there. Then she got into it and left. But before she had gone over to Burrell's place for some reason, Wells had gone over to Burrell's for some reason, and then something happened at Burrell's place, and after it happened, Burrell called Edith Parker and told her to come and get Wells's car and take it somewhere, and she did that. And after she took it over to the store and left it there and disappeared from the store, she called the cab and told the driver to take her close to the street that Burrell lives on because she didn't want the cab driver she wanted to go back to Burrell's place and get into her car and leave place."

"Make sense."

"Yeah, it does."

"But what happened at Burrell's place that caused Edith Parker to go over there and take Wells's car to the store and park the car there and leave the car?"

"That's an interesting question. But whatever it was that happened at Burrell's place, it happened suddenly, unexpectedly, causing Burrell and Wells or one of them to get rid of Wells's car. And so Burrell and Wells or one of them called Edith Parker and told her what happened at Burrell's place and then told her go over to Burrell's place and get Wells's car and take it somewhere where she could get rid of it."

"And while she did that, Burrell and Wells or one of them erased all evidence of whatever it was that happened at Burrell's place."

"Yeah, and the reason why Edith took Wells's car to the store and left it there was because no one at the store knew her. And she had never been to the store. If she took the car to her place or Transferral or Components, Inc. or Wells's place or Wells's office and left the car at one of those places, someone there, especially someone who knows Edith, would ask Edith why she took

the car to that place and left it there. And Edith couldn't tell that person or someone else why she'd leave the car at that place."

"Yeah. And she or Wells or Burrell or two of them or all three of them couldn't leave Wells's car at Burrell's place, either."

"And now the car is clean and in a place that'll remove all suspicion from Burrell and Wells and Edith. They could deny knowing the car's there."

"Yeah. And after Burrell and Wells or one of them removed all evidence of whatever it was that happened at Burrell's place, and after Edith got rid of Wells's car, all three people disappeared. That would explain why all three people aren't at home and not at work."

"Yeah."

"What about fingerprints? Were there any on Wells's car? Either inside his car or outside his car?"

"Just Wells's fingerprints. The police didn't find anyone else's fingerprints inside

or outside Wells's car; they didn't even find Edith Parker's fingerprints inside or outside Wells's car. The store employee remembers seeing Edith Parker wearing gloves when he saw her drive Wells's car into the parking lot of the store and park it there and walk away from the car and leave the store; she didn't even leave any fingerprints on Wells's keys when she drove the car."

"Of course. She wouldn't want to leave fingerprints on Wells's car or on the keys of his car. It'd be incriminating if she would."

"Yeah. We're watching Wells's car right now to see what happens next. We're putting the car under twenty four hour surveillance. We also tried to find Edith Parker so we could ask her why she drove Wells's car into the parking lot of the store and parked the car in the parking lot and walked away from the car and left the store, but we haven't found her. But we're still looking for her."

"But even if you *do* find her and ask her



why she drove Wells's car to the store and parked it there and left it there, she won't tell you why she took the car to the store and parked it there and left it here. Not only, if you asked her why she disappeared, she may have an excuse for that, an excuse that wouldn't arouse suspicion."

"Of course."

"We also searched Edith's place and Transferral to find out if those places could tell us why she drove Wells's car to the store and parked it there and walked away from it and left the store, but we didn't find anything at those places."

"I see."

"We're putting both of those places under twenty four hour surveillance in case she goes back to those places."

"Of course."

"We're also putting under twenty four hour surveillance Wells's place and his office in case he goes back to those places for some reason, and we're also putting under twenty

four hour surveillance Burrell's place and Components, Inc. in case he goes back to those places for some reason."

"Of course. Well, it doesn't look like what Edith did with Wells's car was a crime. But it looks like what she did with it was suspicious."

"I know. Well, that's all for now. I'll keep you posted on further developments."

"And I'll do the same for you. And thanks for bringing to my attention the discovery of Wells's car."

"No problem. And good luck on finding a way to investigate Wells."

"Thanks."

"No problem. If there's anything I can do to help, let me know."

"I'll do that. Bye, John."

"Bye, Rich." Then John hung up.

So did I. Then I resumed watching TV and sipping coffee and thinking of a way to investigate Wells. . . . Then, I thought of a way to investigate Wells.

## CHAPTER VII

I was here at Wells's place now. Ready to carry out the plan I had come up with on how to investigate Wells. I knocked on the front door of Wells's place. No answer. Then I knocked on his door again. Again no answer. Then I knocked on his door one more time. Again, no answer.

"Can I help you?" a voice said.

I turned to face the speaker--a woman. She wasn't very tall, slender, had long blonde hair in a ponytail, big brown eyes, a creamy pale complexion, beige lips that weren't too thin, but they weren't too thick, and she was wearing a long sleeve beige turtleneck sweater and black pants and black tennis shoes.

I was surprised to see her standing there,

asking me if she could help me, although I didn't look surprised. I couldn't. The next phase in my plan on how to investigate Wells was to pretend to go over to a next door neighbor's house and ask him or her where Wells was after I see if Wells was at home. I was looking for him. He and I keep in touch. Then one day I hadn't heard from him and wondered why. I had tried to get a hold of Wells by phone, but there had been no answer. And so I decided to come here to Bellingham to find out why I hadn't heard from him. And now this woman had saved me the job of going over to a next door neighbor's place to ask the neighbor where I could find Wells. "Well, I hope so," I said to the woman. "I'm looking for Hal Wells. He's a friend of mine. I used to live here in Bellingham, but I live in Fremont, Michigan now. But Hal and I still keep in touch. Then one day I didn't hear from him. I wondered about that. Then I tried to get a hold of him by phone so I could talk to him, but there

was no answer. And so I decided to come here to Bellingham to find out why I haven't heard from him."

"I see," the woman said. "Well, I just called him to tell him I need to talk to him about something, but he didn't answer. So I thought I'd come over here to his place to see if he were in."

"Well, I just knocked on the door. No answer."

"Which means he must not be in."

"Yeah. Do you know where I could find him?"

"Well, if he's not at home, he's at work." Then she told me where Wells worked.

"I already know where he works, but I will try that place."

Then the woman told me about some other places I could try to get a hold of Wells at as well as try to get a hold of Wells at work. Wells went to those places. And I took my notebook out of my pocket and wrote down in my notebook those places that the

woman just recommended. Then I spoke to her again: "When's the last time *you* saw him?"

Then she told me that the last time she had seen him was a few days before Burrell had disappeared. I was surprised to hear that, but I didn't look surprised. I couldn't. For the sake of carrying out my plan on how to investigate Wells. I didn't ask her any questions about Burrell. I had to pretend I didn't know about Burrell and his disappearance and the disappearance of his car and his watch and the criminal information on him. I spoke to the woman again: "What was he doing at that time?"

"Complaining."

"Complaining. About what?"

"He said his girlfriend broke up with him. She told him that she didn't love him anymore."

I wondered about that.

"Yeah," the woman said. "That's what he told me. But he also told me that he found it

hard to believe that she stopped loving him."

"I take it he didn't take that very well?"

"No, he didn't. He felt rejected, deceived."

"I imagine he would. I imagine his girlfriend was Edith Parker? He told me about her. Although I never met her."

"Yeah. She was Hal's girl friend."

"Do you know where I could find her so I can ask her where Hal is and what happened to him?"

Then she told me Edith's home and work addresses and her home and work and cell phone numbers and I wrote them down in my notebook, although I already knew these addresses and phone numbers, but I had to pretend I didn't know them for the sake of investigating Wells the way I had planned. Then I spoke to the woman again: "I don't mean to pry, but why did *you* want to see Hal? Maybe whatever it is you wanted to see Hal about could help me find him and find out what happened to him."

"Oh, it's nothing important. I just wanted to borrow some coffee from him. I ran out."

"Oh. Is there anything else you could tell me that could help me find him and find out what happened to him?"

"No. I'm afraid not."

"All right," I said then I put my pen and notebook back into my pocket.

"I hope you find him and find out what happened to him."

"I hope so, too. Bye."

"Bye."

Then I got into my car and started it up, and then I pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street and looked around for a good place to have coffee at and think at. I found it and went into it.

I was here inside a coffee shop now. Sitting at a booth and sipping coffee and thinking about the conversation I had had with the woman about Wells: Edith's breaking up with Wells.



I found that interesting. If she had broken up with Wells suddenly, then that could have made Wells curious as well as it had upset him. He'd want to know why Edith had suddenly broken up with Wells. And I doubt if the excuse she had given him for breaking up with him would have been a good excuse to break up with him. And so he must have decided to find out why she had broken up with him. And in the course of his investigation, he found out that she had gotten it together with Burrell. And then he had investigated Burrell and hadn't liked what he had found out about Burrell. And so he had come up with an idea to get Edith to get it back together with him: he blackmails Burrell into making him break up with Edith and staying away from Edith or he'll show her or other people or both the information he had gotten on Burrell. And that information he had gotten on Burrell had to be the criminal information. That would explain the criminal information on Burrell I

had seen hidden inside Wells's place.

Then there was something else I realized: Wells may have made a copy of the information and hidden it somewhere else as well as he had hidden the other copy of the information inside the false bottom of one of the drawers of his desk. That way, if he lost one copy of the information, he'd have the other copy to use. And that other copy of the information he had hidden somewhere else may have been on something instead of a computer disc. Like paper or tape or a voice recorder or on anything else you could put information on. Or, that copy of the information may have been on a computer disc. And then Wells may have printed out the information on Burrell instead of take the disc with him and have Burrell look at the disc in Burrell's computer and had gone over to Burrell's place and had showed the print out on the information to Burrell and told Burrell what he was going to do with the information. And then, of course, Burrell

hadn't liked what Wells had told Burrell what he was going to do with the information. And then Wells must have also told Burrell that he had a copy of the information somewhere in case he'd lose the other disc the information was on. And then, after that, Burrell must have killed Wells or rendered Wells unconscious somehow and took the information away from Wells. And then Burrell put Wells's body into the trunk of his car, and then he must have gone over to one of the windows of his house and peeked out of it to see if Wells's car were there. Then he saw it was there and called Edith and told her what he had done to Wells and then told her to go over to Burrell's place and get Wells's car and take it somewhere to get rid of it while Burrell removes all evidence of what had happened at his place. Then Edith had gone over to Burrell's place and Burrell had told Edith where to meet him after she gets rid of Wells's body and after Burrell gets rid of

Wells himself, and then Edith had gotten into Wells's car and drove it to the store and had left it there while Burrell had removed all evidence of what had happened at his place, and then he had taken Wells's body somewhere and buried it there, or, Burrell had taken Wells somewhere, then killed him there and buried his body there. And after Edith had gotten rid of Wells's car and had disappeared from the store, she had gone to where Burrell had told her to meet her at the way she had gone there. Then I decided that in order to find out if all of this had happened, I go over to Burrell's place and see if I can find out what had happened there at Burrell's place after Wells had gone over to the place and had showed Burrell the print out on the information and had told Burrell what he was going to do with the information. So I finished my coffee and left a nice tip on the table and paid the check and left the restaurant.

I was driving over to Burrell's place now.

Along the way, I listened in on Burrell's place and his landline phone there. The radio to the bug I had put inside Burrell's place, and the radio to the tap I had put inside Burrell's landline phone at his place, were on the front seat of my car. But I didn't hear anything going on at Burrell's place. Which meant that Burrell was still away from his place, or, he had gone back to his place for some reason, but then he had left his place for some reason. And there were no phone conversations on his landline phone. No one had called his place, and Burrell hadn't been at his place and hadn't called anyone from his place.

When I got here to Burrell's place, the first thing I did before I found out what had happened here at Burrell's place was look around the place to see if anything had happened since the last time I had been here and now. Nothing had happened here since the last time I had been and now. Which meant that nothing *had* happened here since

the last time I had been here and now, or, something had happened here since the last time I had been here and now, but the evidence of the occurrence had been removed, or, something had happened here since the last time I had been here and now, but the person or persons who had caused the occurrence hadn't disturbed anything while he, she, or they, had been here. Then I looked at Burrell's answering machine to see if he had gotten messages. That was all I could do. I couldn't turn on the answering machine and listen to it. If I would, Burrell would notice that someone had been here and one of the things he had done while he had been here was check Burrell's answering machine. The machine said that Burrell didn't get any messages. Then I went into the living room to start my examination of what may have happened here at Burrell's place that had to do with why Wells had come here to Burrell's place and had tried to blackmail Burrell.

I was standing here inside the living room right now. I looked around and wondered and visualized what Burrell and Wells may have done here. And it looked like Wells had come here to Burrell's place and had tried to blackmail Burrell. Burrell's place would be the perfect place for Wells to blackmail Burrell in. He'd be able to blackmail Burrell secretly. No one else could see what Burrell and Wells had done. And it also looked like Burrell had kept Wells from blackmailing him the way I had theorized. And it looked like everything else I had theorized about what had happened here at Burrell's place about Wells's coming over here to Burrell's place and trying to blackmail Burrell had happened here.

## CHAPTER VIII

I am standing here inside Burrell's garage and thinking right now. If Burrell had killed Wells, then Burrell must have taken Wells's body out into his garage and put Wells's body into the trunk of his car, and then, Burrell had gotten out some canvas and had wrapped Wells's body in the canvas, and then he had closed the trunk of his car, and then, he had put a shovel into the back seat of his car, and then he had left his place and had taken Wells's body somewhere and had buried it there. Or, if Burrell had rendered Wells unconscious, then Burrell must have taken Wells into the garage and had put him in the trunk of his car, and then he wrapped Wells in the canvas, and then Burrell must have put the shovel into the back seat of his car, and then he must have driven Wells



somewhere and killed him at that place, and then Burrell had buried Wells's body in that place. And then Burrell must have called Edith and had told her he had gotten rid of Wells and that he was going over to the place he had told Edith to meet him at, and then he had gone to that place. And after he had met Edith at that place, he had destroyed the print out on the information on him, and then he and Edith realized they should stay out of sight for a while until the occurrence at Burrell's place dies down and establish an alibi for Burrell and look for those two discs the information on Burrell were so no one could find them and use them.

But Burrell and Edith must not have found those discs. But they were still looking for them.

And there was something else: if Burrell and his car and Edith and her car and Wells and his car had disappeared at the same time, and after Burrell's watch had been

stolen, then maybe Burrell and his car and Edith and her car and Wells and his car disappearing had nothing to do with the theft of Burrell's watch. The disappearances of Burrell and his car and Edith and her car and Wells and his car and the theft of Burrell's pocket watch weren't not connected. Or, the disappearances of Burrell and his car and Edith and her car and Wells and his car and the theft of Burrell's pocket watch *were* connected.

I walked out of Burrell's place and got back into my car and started it up and left Burrell's place without being seen. I was done here at Burrell's place. It was time now for me to leave.

When I got as far away from Burrell's place as I could get, I turned onto a cross street and parked my car in front of someone's place and took my voice recorder out of my pocket and recorded what I had done at Burrell's place and why I had done it and what I had theorized there. After I made

my recording, I turned my recorder off and put it back into my pocket and looked at my watch. Twelve o-three.

It was lunch time now, and I was getting hungry. So I might as well eat while I had the chance to eat. Then call John and request a meeting with him. I was going to need to tell him what I had done after the last time he and I had talked and find out from him what *he* had found out in the investigation since the last time he and I had talked. So I started up my car and pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street and looked around for a good place to eat at. I found it and went into it.

I was here at Lee's Drive In now. Sitting at a booth and eating a hamburger and washing it down with Coke.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I was having more Coke. Then I took my cell phone out of my pocket and called Patrol and got a hold of John and requested a

meeting with him, and then he and I agreed upon where and when to have the meeting. Then he and I hung up. After that I put my cell phone back into my pocket and looked at my watch. Twelve seventeen.

My appointment with John was at two o'clock today. That was going to give me more than enough time to type up my report on what I had done since the last time I had talked to John and show it to him. So I took my time sipping my Coke and kept track of time.

It was time now for me to leave, and so I finished my Coke and left the restaurant and went back to Patrol and went back into my office and typed up the report on what I had done since the last time I had talked to John and stayed inside my office and did some other paperwork until it was time for me to go see John about what I had done since the last time he and I had talked to each other.

I was here inside John's office now. Sitting in front of his desk while he was

sitting behind it and reading my report on what I had done since the last time he and I had talked.

"I see," John said and nodded after he finished reading my report on what I had done since the last time he and I had talked. "This theory of yours about what happened at Burrell's place would explain all of those occurrences."

"Yes, it would," I said.

"It's too bad you don't have any evidence."

"Yes, it is."

"But if Burrell had murdered Wells because Wells tried to blackmail Burrell so Wells could get it back together with Edith Parker, then Burrell's not going to get the insurance money from us if we don't find his pocket watch. Instead, he'll going to prison or will be executed."

"I know. And then there's something else: if Edith Parker had helped Burrell get rid of Wells and his car, then that would

mean that Edith Parker broke up with Wells because she wanted to get it together with Burrell. And because of this, it would have been a waste of time for Wells to blackmail Burrell."

"Yeah."

"And Burrell and Edith Parker must be looking for those two discs the information on Burrell is on now because they don't want someone else to discover those discs and use them against Burrell."

"Of course. And Burrell and Edith Parker must be working out an alibi for Burrell so he could say he was somewhere else and with someone else at the time Wells was murdered, too."

"Of course."

"I'll call Missing Persons and tell them about your theory about why Wells was murdered. We still haven't found Burrell and Edith Parker, but we're still looking for them; we still haven't found Burrell's pocket watch, but we're still looking for it." Then

John got on his landline phone and called Missing Persons and told them what John and I had just talked about and about what John had read in my report on what I had done since the last time I had talked to John. Then John got off of the phone with Missing Persons and spoke to me again: "Missing Persons is going to look for Wells's body as well as they'll continue looking for Burrell and Edith Parker and their cars."

"Good."

"Our guess is that they're still here in Bellingham. The police and our people have checked to see if they left Bellingham by plane or train or bus or boat, but there's no information of their leaving Bellingham by plane or train or bus or boat, so they still have to be here in Bellingham."

"Or maybe they left Bellingham in their cars or in Burrell's car or in Edith's car because they had to flee Bellingham because Burrell had murdered Wells, and in the course of their fleeing Bellingham, they

ditched Burrell's car if they were driving in Burrell's car, then they continued fleeing Bellingham in another car, or, if they were driving in Edith's car, they ditched Edith Parker's car, and then, they continued fleeing Bellingham in another car, or, if Burrell were driving in *his* car, and Edith were driving in *her* car while the both of them were fleeing Bellingham, then maybe the both of them ditched both of their cars, and then Burrell got into another car, and, Edith got into another car, and then, the both of them continued fleeing Bellingham."

"Of course. The heat is on."

"Exactly. But if Burrell and Edith are still here in Bellingham. and in hiding, then maybe they're staying somewhere, but they're not paying for their food and lodging with credit cards or debit cards or checks. Instead, they're paying for their food and lodging with cash. And they're using phony names instead of their real names while they're staying at that place, too, because



they don't want anyone to know where they are."

"Of course."

"My guess is that they are still here in Bellingham. My guess is that they need to stay here in Bellingham until they've found those two discs the information on Burrell are on and establish the alibi for Burrell. And then, after they've done *those* two things, they'll resurface and tell everyone--including the police--what they want them to know about why they disappeared and why they were gone so long, and after they've explain their disappearances to everyone's satisfaction---and to the police's satisfaction--they continue doing what they've done before. "

"And that's the end of it. They get away with what they did."

"Yeah."

John noticed my wondering about something and asked me what it was I was wondering about.

"I'd rather tell you about it after I've done it," I answered John's question. "If I'm wrong about this, I want it to blow up in *my* face and not your face and anyone else's face and mine. Only *I* will take responsibility for what I'm going to do."

John wondered about what I said, then he spoke: "All right."

"Thanks, John. If I'm right about this, though, I'll tell you about it."

"All right."

"If there isn't anything else, I'll get started on this venture."

"Not right now. We do have to help the police find Burrell and Edith and Wells and Burrell's car and his watch and Edith's car and Wells's car."

"I know. But I did say that after I carry out this venture, I'll get back to you."

"All right."

"See ya later, John."

"See ya later, Rich."

Then I left John's office.

I was here at Wells's place now. Inside his study. Before I carried out my venture, I checked to see if Wells's disc that had the criminal information on Burrell were still inside its hiding place. It was. Which meant that Burrell and Edith must not have come here to Wells's place to look for the information on Burrell, or, they *had* come here to Wells's place to look for the information, but they hadn't found it. Then I realized that I could carry out my venture now. I had checked to see if the information on Burrell were still inside its hiding place. Then I listened to the announcement of Wells's answering machine and recorded it on my voice recorder, and then I turned off the answering machine and put my voice recorder back into my pocket, and then I looked for something that said he had a safety deposit box. I found it. It was a statement from his bank saying it was time for him to pay for renting the safety deposit box he had at his bank. So now I knew he

had a safety deposit box at his bank. Then I continued looking through his study to see if he had *his* key for the deposit box. There would be the possibility that he'd keep the key here at his place instead of take with him. For safe keeping. I found it. It was inside his cash box. And he kept his cash box inside one of the drawers of his desk. I had picked the lock on the cash box to get inside the cash box to see if the safety deposit box key were inside the cash box. Then I took the key out of the cash box and put it into my pocket and locked up the cash box and put the box back in the drawer I had found it in, and then I continued looking inside the study to see if there was something with Wells's handwriting on it. There was: a cancelled check. I put it in my pocket, and then I walked out of Wells's place and got into my car and started it up and left Wells's place without being seen or heard, and then I went back to *my* place and into *my* study and sat down at *my* desk and took Wells's

cancelled check out of my pocket and looked at Wells's handwriting on the check and took a piece of paper out of one the drawers of my desk and wrote Wells's name on the paper in his handwriting until my writing his name in his handwriting as exactly the same as Wells's handwriting. Then I went into my make-up room and made a mask of Wells. I was the same height and had the same build as Wells, so that helped. Wells was a tall, lean man, with auburn hair, brown eyes, and sharp features. Then I got out my voice recorder and listened to the announcement of Wells's answering machine so I could imitate Wells's voice. Then I said Wells's answering machine announcement in his voice until I sounded exactly like Wells. Then I turned the recorder off and looked at my watch. Three fifty-seven.

I might have time to pull this venture of mine today. It wasn't going to take me long to pull off the venture. So I put on the mask of Wells and stepped out of my place and

locked it, and then I got into my car and started it up, and then I drove over to Wells's bank.

When I got here, I parked my car in front of someone's place and out of sight of Wells's bank, and then I got out of my car and locked it, and then I walked over to Wells's bank. I didn't want anyone who worked at the bank to see me driving over to Wells's bank in my car. If they would, they'd wonder why Wells was driving over to his bank in my car. The people who worked at the bank may have known what kind of Wells drove, or, Wells himself may have told them what kind of car he drove.

When I got here to Wells's bank, I walked in and told one of the employees I'd like to see Wells's safety deposit box. Then he had me sign a card saying Wells was going to need to see his safety deposit box, and I signed it, and then the man took me into the vault, and then he put *his* key into the lock of Wells's safety deposit box, and I

put Wells's car into the other lock of the safety deposit box, and then the both of us turned the keys. And then the both of us took the box out of its slot, and then the man left me alone so I could look into the box privately. Then I looked into the box. Then, I stopped suddenly. My gaze became fixed. Then, I looked to see what the employee was doing. He was at the door of the vault and looking out the door. He didn't see what I was doing. He wasn't supposed to. Since the contents of the safety deposit box were confidential. Then, I looked back at what was inside the safety box: a computer disc. I wondered about this. Maybe this disc would be what I thought it would be. But I was going to have to find out. But not here. Instead, I was going to have to find out at my place. Then I took the disc out of the safety deposit box and put it into my pocket, and then I closed the lid of the safety deposit box and told the employee I was done with the box, and then the employee and I put

the box back into the box's slot and locked up the slot with our keys, and then I put Wells's key back into my pocket, and then the employee and I left the vault, and then the employee went somewhere else inside the bank to do something there, and I left the bank and went back to my car and got into it and started it up, and then I pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street and back to my place.

I was here at my place now. Sitting inside my study and putting into the tray of my computer the disc I had found inside Wells's safety deposit box. It was time now for me to see what I thought would be on *this* disc. And then I saw it. Then, I sat back in my chair and sat erect, my gaze became fixed.

On this disc was the same kind of criminal information on Burrell I had seen on the other disc that Wells was hiding at his place. I saw what I had wanted to see.



## CHAPTER IX

I made a copy of this disc and put it into a box and put it one of the drawers of my desk and locked the drawer, and then I took Wells's disc out of the tray of my computer and put it back into *its* box and closed the tray of my computer, and then I looked at my watch. Five fifty-six.

Wells's bank must be closed right now. Because of that I was going to go back to Wells's bank tomorrow and put *his* disc back into his safety deposit box. So I put Wells's disc into another drawer of my desk, and then I locked up the drawer. I didn't want to lock up both discs in the same drawer. I wanted to keep them separate from each other so I'd know which disc was whose. Then I went into the kitchen to make dinner. I was getting hungry, but I was going

to eat in this time. I wanted to be near both discs until I go back to Wells's bank and put Wells's disc back into his safety deposit box, *and*, until I show the other disc to John and to keep someone--including Burrell and Edith--from finding out where both discs were and stealing them. Even though I had locked up both discs.

I was here inside the living room now. Sitting in my favorite recliner chair and watching TV and eating the delicious chiliburger I had made and washing it down with rum punch and keeping track of time. I was going to turn in early tonight so I could go back over to Wells's bank and put his disc back into his safety deposit box and show the other disc to John tomorrow.

I felt better after I had eaten. Now I was having more rum punch and continued watching TV. I was going to have dessert later.

When the time came to have dessert, I went into the kitchen and dished up some

rainbow sherbet and went back into the living room and sat down in my chair and continued watching TV and ate the sherbet and continued keeping track of time.

At eleven o'clock, I turned the TV off and went into my room and turned the light on, and then I set the alarm clock for a time I wanted to get up at tomorrow, and then I put my gun underneath the pillow, and then I got undressed and got into my pajamas, and then I turned the light off and got into bed and went to sleep.

The next day, I went over to Wells's bank in my disguise as Wells, and then I put Wells's disc back into his safety deposit box, and then I left Wells's bank and went back to my place and took off the mask of Wells and called Patrol and told the operator I needed to talk to John. Then she connected me to John's office. When Marla answered and I told her it was me, she spoke to me: "John told me you were going to be incommunicado for a while. That you were

going to do something, but you couldn't tell John what it is you were going to do until after you do it."

"That's right," I said. "And I've done it, and I can tell John what I did and why I did it, and I'd like to tell John what I did and why I did it if he's there."

"No, he's not. He's at police headquarters right now. We found Anson Burrell's pocket watch and the person who stole it."

"Really."

"Yeah. John and the police are interrogating the person who stole Anson Burrell's pocket watch right now. They want to know if his stealing the watch has to do with Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of his car and that information on Burrell and Edith Parker's disappearance and the disappearance of *her* car and Hal Wells's disappearance and the disappearance of *his* car as well as find out why the person stole the watch and how he stole it. Although we've got a pretty good

idea how he stole it."

"Of course. Well, I'll go over to police headquarters and tell John what I did and why I did it while I was incommunicado and join in on the interrogation of that person who stole Burrell's pocket watch."

"All right. I call John and tell him you're going over there."

"Great." Then I hung up.

I was here at police headquarters now. Inside the interrogation room that John and the police were interrogating the thief who had stolen Burrell's pocket watch in and looking at the pocket watch. The pocket watch was in my hands right now. It looked just as good as its picture.

"The man who stole the watch is Wes Wayne," John told me. "He used to work for a messenger service. As a messenger. Then one day he got fired because he was drinking on the job. Burrell met Wayne in a coffee shop one day, and at that time, Burrell pulled his pocket watch out of his pocket to

see what time it was, and then Wayne decided he wanted the watch. And so, in order to steal it, he worked out a plan to steal the watch. First he found out where Burrell works and lives so he could follow Burrell home and sneak into his house and steal the watch while Burrell was busy in another room. Like the bathroom. Burrell would take a shower or a bath after he goes home. Then Wayne followed Burrell until he saw Burrell go home from work and saw Burrell go into his house, and he snuck into the house and heard Burrell take his shower, and then he snuck into Burrell's bedroom and stole the watch and snuck out of Burrell's house and back into his car and drove away. No one saw or heard what he did."

"So Wayne did steal the watch the way we suspected."

"Yeah, he did. And we told him about Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of his car and the information

on Burrell and Edith Parker's disappearance and the disappearance of *her* car and Wells's disappearance and the disappearance of *his* car, but he swears his stealing the watch has nothing to do with Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of his car and the information on Burrell and Edith Parker's disappearance and the disappearance of *her* car and Wells's disappearance and the disappearance of *his* car."

"Which means that the theft of the watch and these disappearances aren't connected."

"That's right. They're not. Wayne didn't know anything about those disappearances, and he had no involvement in them."

"I see." Then I told John about what I had done and why I had done it. "And the reason why I didn't tell you I thought that other copy of the information on Burrell was in Wells's safety deposit box was because I wanted to know for sure that that the copy of the information *was* in his safety deposit box before I told you it *was* in his safety

deposit box."

"I understand."

"And after I duplicated the information, I went over to Wells's bank and put Wells's copy of the information back into his safety deposit box. I have the duplicate copy of the information with me right now."

"I'll want to take a look at it after we're done here."

"Of course."

John, the police, and I, *were* done with Wayne. We didn't have any more questions to ask him. So the police took Wayne to the booking section and booked him for theft and locked him up, and then John and I went back to Patrol.

John and I were at Patrol now. Walking into the reception room of John's office.

Marla was sitting behind her console doing some paperwork.

John and I walked over to her, and then I told Marla what I had done and why I had done it and how I had done it while I had



been incommunicado, and then John took Burrell's pocket watch out of his pocket and showed it to Marla and told her about the results of his and the police's interrogating Wayne about theft of the watch and about the disappearances of Burrell and his car and about the information on Burrell and about the disappearances of Edith Parker and *her* car and Wells and *his* car. Then John and I went into John's office so we could look at the other copy of the criminal information on Burrell.

We were sitting behind John's desk and looking at the copy of the information now.

After we looked at it, John took the disc out of the tray of his computer and put it back into its box and closed the tray of his computer.

"I could see why Wells is keeping that other copy of the information inside his safety deposit box," I told John. "Even if Burrell or Edith Parker or someone else found out where that other copy of the

information was, they'd have one hell of a time hard time getting their hands on it. And to make it more difficult or impossible for them to get their hands on the information, Wells could have hidden the key to the safety deposit box somewhere and not tell anyone where he hid it--including Burrell and Edith Parker and anyone else who wanted to get their hands on the information."

"Yeah. But *you* took quite a risk imitating Wells and getting that copy of the information and returning it after you were done with it."

"I know. But I did tell you why I did it."

"Yes, you did. So all we have to do now is find Burrell and Edith Parker and Wells and Burrell's car and Edith Parker's car if we find out that Burrell and Edith Parker are responsible for Wells's murder, and find out if Wells really is dead and find his body."

"I know."

## CHAPTER X

John, Marla, the police, and I were here at Marla's place now. We had worked out a plan to finish the investigation. Now John and Marla and Captain Bill Davis of Homicide and I were here inside Marla's place while we waited for the plan to go into effect, and Davis's men were outside Marla's place and staking it out and watching both sides of the road while *they* waited for the plan to go into effect.

"More fruit punch?" Marla asked John and Davis and me.

Marla and John and Davis and I were here inside Marla's living room and watching TV.

John and I said we'd like to have some more punch. Davis said he didn't want anymore. Marla poured more fruit punch

into John's glass and mine.

The phone rang. Marla went over to it to answer it. She wasn't very tall, plump, had long, thick brown hair, brown eyes, a creamy pallor complexion, high cheekbones, a thin beige upper lip, a thick beige lower lip, and she was wearing a short sleeve white turtleneck sweater and brown pants and black tennis shoes.

When she reached the phone, she picked up the receiver of the phone and said hello.

"Hello," a male voice said. "Is this Marla Hoyt?"

"Yes," Marla said. "This is Marla Hoyt."

"Ms Hoyt, I read about the ad you placed in the paper about the pocket watch for sale? The solid gold pocket watch with a labyrinth on the cover of the watch and on the labyrinth is the head of Minotaur?"

"Yes. I placed the ad in the paper about the watch."

"I'd like to buy it."

"All right."

"I'll be over there in a few minutes."

"I'll be here."

"Fine. Bye."

"Bye." Then Marla hung up. Then she told us about the conversation with the man who wanted to buy the pocket watch.

"Maybe he'll be our man this time. The other people who wanted to buy the watch weren't our man." Davis said. Other people had called Marla's place and had told her *they* had wanted to buy the pocket watch, but when they had showed up none of them were Burrell. And because of this, Marla had told them that she had already sold the watch so that she and John and the police and I could execute our plan to finish the investigation.

"I hope so," I said.

"I hope so, too," *John* said.

Marla poured herself another glass of fruit punch and sat down on the couch and continued watching TV with John and Davis and me while we waited for the man to show

up and buy the watch.

A few minutes later, Davis's cell phone rang. He took it out of his pocket and said his name. Then he hung up and spoke to John and Marla and me: "That was one of my men. He told me that he and the rest of my men saw Burrell and Edith Parker show up. Well. We'd better get ready for them."

"Yeah," I said.

Then John and Davis and I collected our fruit punches and got off of the couch and left the living room and went into the hall and into a guest room and almost completely closed the door. We left the door open just enough to peek out of it and see what was going to happen. We were going to need to. We also listened.

John was tall, thin, tanned, had short dark hair combed neatly away from his forehead, hazel eyes, a swarthy face, and he was wearing a mocha tan coat and a light tan shirt, no tie, open collar, and blue jeans and black tennis shoes.

Davis was tall, broad shoulder, gray, had a tapering build, and he was wearing a gray suit and a white shirt with gray pinstripes and a dark charcoal tie and black leather shoes.

Then, John, Davis, and I heard the chime of Marla's front door. Then we saw Marla go to the front door and open it. Then we saw Marla smile at who was outside her door. Then she invited them to come in. They did.

The people who *did* come in *were* Burrell and Edith Parker.

Burrell was wearing a light brown sports coat and a light yellow shirt, no tie, open collar, and brown pants and black leather shoes, and Edith was wearing an orange turtleneck sweater and matching pants and shiny black high heel shoes, and the strap of her shiny black shoulder strap handbag was resting on her right shoulder, and her right hand was grasping the strap of her purse.

Marla introduced herself to Burrell and Edith. And Burrell and Edith Parker

introduced themselves to Marla. As Anson Burrell and Edith Parker.

I thought about that. Maybe no one knew why Burrell and Edith had disappeared. Or, maybe Burrell and Edith had worked out Burrell's alibi and were ready to resurface.

Marla showed no surprise for Burrell and Edith introducing themselves to her as Anson Burrell and Edith Parker. She couldn't. Then she asked Burrell and Edith if they'd like to have something to drink, but Burrell and Edith said they were fine. Then Marla told Burrell and Edith where the pocket watch was, and then Marla and Burrell and Edith walked into the living room. As they walked through the living room, Burrell and Edith noticed that Marla's computer was on. Then, they stopped suddenly. Then, their eyes and mouth widened.

Burrell and Edith saw the information on Burrell on Marla's computer.



"You look surprised."

Burrell and Edith turned to face the speaker--me. John and Davis and I had tip-toed out of the guest room and into the living room and stood inside the living room. Then, Burrell and Edith looked at John and Davis and me. Then, Burrell spoke to us: "What is this?"

Then Davis took his badge and ID out of his pocket and showed them to Burrell and Edith and told Burrell and Edith who he was. And John and I showed him our Patrol Insurance investigator's ID and told Burrell and Edith who we were. Then I spoke to Burrell again: "I found that information on you in the course of my looking for your stolen pocket watch and when I discovered you disappeared and looked for you. I've got a pretty good idea why you killed Hal Wells, and it has to do with this information." Then I told Burrell and Edith what that theory was.

"Well, that's very interesting," Burrell

said with a crooked smile after I had finished. "But just because you found that information on me doesn't mean I killed Wells."

"No. It doesn't. But you do have to explain why you disappeared and why you were gone so long."

Burrell didn't say anything; neither did Edith. My guess was that they hadn't established Burrell's alibi yet. Then, Burrell whipped his .45 automatic out of his shoulder holster and stuck into Marla's back. Then he spoke to John and Davis and me: "Make one wrong move and she's dead."

Edith took her .38 automatic out of her purse and pointed it at John and Davis and me.

"So you did kill Wells," I said.

"Yeah," Burrell said. "But I didn't want to. He came to me one day and told me he found out about some things I did and some things I was going to do and showed me the information he had on the things I did and

the things I was going to do."

"Those things that you did were criminal, and the things that you were going to do *were* criminal."

Burrell smiled wryly. Then he spoke again: "Then Wells threatened to show the information he had on me about the things I did and the things I was going to do to Edith and to other people if I didn't break up with Edith and stay away from her. He was jealous. He didn't want to break up with Edith. He loved her. But Edith didn't want to have anything more to do with him."

"And so Edith broke up with Wells and got it together with you."

"That's right," Edith admitted. "I did. And you're right: I didn't want to have anything more to do with Hal. I got tired of him. And then I got it together with Anson." Then Edith smiled at Burrell and spoke again: "And I'm glad I did."

"We can take for granted that criminal life agrees with you," I then said to Edith.

Edith smiled at me. Then she spoke to me: "Yes. It does. I'm glad I broke up with Hal and got it together with Anson."

"I'm sure you are. And you helped Burrell get rid of Wells and his car, too?"

"Yes, I did. When Anson told me he killed Hal to keep Hal from blackmailing him I helped Anson get rid of Hal and his car."

Then John told Edith where he had found Wells's car and that we had found out she had put the car in the parking lot of the store.

"That's right," Edith admitted after John had finished. "I did put it there after Anson killed Hal and smuggled Hal's body out of Anson's place and into his car and took Hal's body out into a wooded area and buried his body."

"I take it Wells went to Burrell's place and tried to blackmail him there?" I asked.

"That's right, he did," Burrell admitted.

"Where did you bury Wells's body?"

"In a wooded area a few miles south of Bellingham."

"And after you buried Wells's body and ditched his car," I then said to both Burrell and Edith. "You were getting Burrell's alibi established for why he disappeared and why he was gone so long."

"Yeah," Edith admitted. "And we almost finished getting that alibi established when we read the ad in the paper about the pocket watch and came here so Aaron could tell you it's his pocket watch. You trapped us."

"Yes, we did," I said.

"Yeah," Burrell said. "But Edith and I are the ones who are holding the guns. And we're going to walk out of here with Ms Hoyt. Anyone tries to stop us and she's dead." Then, Burrell and Edith and Marla started to walk out of the living room.

"What about your pocket watch, Mr. Burrell?" I asked Burrell. "Don't you want to take it with you?"

"You have it?" Burrell asked me.

"Yes, I do. It's in my pocket."

"Take it out of your pocket slowly and toss it to me."

Then, I reached into my pocket and took the watch out of my pocket. Then, I tossed it to Burrell. But not far enough so Burrell could catch it. It fell onto the floor a few inches away from Burrell. Then Burrell walked over to the watch to pick it up. And then I jumped him. And then he and I fell down onto the floor. Then Edith aimed her gun at me to kill me, but then Marla knocked the gun out of her hand by chopping Edith's hand with the side of *her* hand. And then the gun fell onto the floor. *I* pushed the hand that Burrell's gun was in against the floor several times to knock the gun out of Burrell's hand. Edith knelt down to pick up *her* gun so she could kill me, but Marla stopped her from doing it by slugging her in the jaw. Then Edith fell back against the wall. *I* slugged Burrell in the jaw, and now Burrell was out cold. Then I collected

Burrell's gun and his pocket watch. Marla collected Edith's gun and held it on Edith. *I* took some smelling salts out of my pocket and waved them underneath the nostrils of Burrell's nose, and then Burrell came to, and *I* stood up and took *my* gun out of *my* shoulder holster and held it on Burrell.

Burrell stood up.

Then I gave Burrell his pocket watch and spoke to Burrell again: "Here's your pocket watch, Mr. Burrell. You can keep it and use it while you're in jail and then when you're in prison. Or, until you're executed."

"But it's too bad that you won't be able to spend the insurance money since we found your watch and since you murdered Wells," John told Burrell. "Since we *have* found your watch, and since you had murdered Wells, our company won't pay off."

Davis took his cell phone out of his pocket and called one of his men and told him our plan to trap Burrell and Edith had worked.

"And we recorded everything all of you said," his man told him.

"Great," Davis said. Then he and his man hung up, and then Davis put his cell phone back into his pocket.

Burrell and Edith looked surprised when Davis's man had said they had recorded everything all of us had been talking about. "You recorded everything we were talking about?" he then asked Davis.

"That's right," Davis said. Then he took the microphone out of his pocket and showed it to Burrell and Edith. "One of my men has the receiver to the mike, and the receiver is attached to a voice recorder." Then Davis put the microphone back into his pocket. Then Davis told Burrell and Edith what he was arresting them for, and then he read them their rights, but before he handcuffed them, he asked Burrell and Edith for the keys to their cars. Burrell took his keys out of his pocket and gave them to Davis, and then Edith *her* keys out of her



purse and gave them to Davis.

"Search our cars if you want," Burrell told Davis. "but you'll find nothing in them that'll connect us to Wells's murder and my destroying the information Wells had on me."

"We made sure of that," Edith said to Davis.

"I'm sure you did," Davis said to Burrell and Edith. Then Davis asked Edith where her car was and she told him. Then Davis handcuffed Burrell and Edith, and then Davis and Burrell and Edith and Marla and John and I walked out of Marla's apartment so Davis and his men and Marla and John and I could take Burrell and Edith down to police headquarters.

Outside Marla's apartment, Davis gave one of his men the keys to Burrell's car and told him to drive Burrell's green gray Honda to police headquarters and search it, and then that man got into Burrell's car and started it up and drove it over to police

headquarters to search it, and then Davis gave another one of his men the keys to Edith's car and told him where Edith's car was and to go to get it and take it to police headquarters and search it, and then that man and another one of Davis's men got into the car belonging one of those men and left Marla's place to go out to the motel and get Edith's car and take it back to police headquarters and search it, and then Davis and the rest of his men and Burrell and Edith got into cars and drove down to police headquarters.

"You can take the rest of the day off and rest up and recuperate before you turn in your report on the Burrell case," John told me. "You'll need to rest up before you turn in your report on the Burrell case. You can turn in your report on the Burrell case tomorrow."

"I'll right. Anything else?"

"No. That's it. See ya tomorrow, Rich."

"See ya tomorrow, John."

Then John got into his brown Buick and started it up, and then he pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street so he could go back to Patrol and finish doing some paperwork there, and I got into *my* car and started it up, and then I pulled away from the curb and into the street and drove down the street so I could go back to my place and rest up and recuperate.

## CHAPTER XI

The next day, I was here at Patrol. Yesterday I had rested up and had recuperated, and then today, I had come here to Patrol and had gone into my office and had typed up the report on the investigation of the Burrell case and took the report and the file on the Burrell case to John. Now I walked into John's office.

John was sitting behind his desk. "Good morning, Rich," he said.

"Good morning, John," I said.

"How are ya?"

"Fine. You?"

"Fine. Davis called this morning. He told me that he and his men searched Burrell's car and Edith Parker's car after they took them downtown and booked them and put them in jail. And they didn't find anything

inside their cars that can connect them to Wells's murder and the information Wells had on Burrell. Their cars were clean. What Burrell said was true: he and Edith Parker made sure there was nothing in or on their cars to connect them to Wells's murder and to the information Wells had on Burrell. But Davis talked Burrell into leading them to the body, so that's all right."

"I see," I said when I reached John's desk and stood in front of it and gave John my report on the investigation of the Burrell case and the file on the Burrell case.

John told me to sit down and I did.

John read the report on the file.

John nodded after he had finished. Then he spoke to me: "Good job."

"Thank you," I said.

"You're welcome." Then John put the report inside the file on the Burrell case, and then he stood up and turned around and put the file in his filing cabinet and locked up the cabinet. Then he turned around and sat

back down in his chair and spoke to me again: "Now the Burrell case is closed. And now we have to tell Lucille Holloway we found Burrell and his watch and what we did and discovered when we found Burrell and his watch."

"I know," I said. "I don't think Ms Holloway's going to like what we'll tell her. But we will have to tell her. It's our job."

"I know."

"I'd like to tell her; not only that, I'd like to see how she's doing."

John thought about that. Then he spoke: "All right."

"Thanks, John."

"You're welcome, Rich."

"Anything else before I leave and go tell Ms Holloway we found Burrell and his pocket and what we did and discovered in our search for Burrell and his pocket watch?"

"No. That's it."

"See ya later, John."

"See ya later, Rich."

Then I left.

Lucille Holloway was here at Components, Inc. right now. Inside the reception room of Burrell's office and sitting here behind her desk and penning her way through some papers. She was still holding up from Burrell's disappearance and the disappearance of Burrell's pocket watch.

The door to the reception room opened, and in I walked.

"Mr. Chandler," Lucille said, smiling. "How are you?"

"Fine," I said. I smiled, too. "You?"

"Fine. Considering."

"Well, that's good. We found Burrell and his pocket watch."

"Oh, really?" Lucille sound excited.

"Yes, we did." Then I walked over to Lucille and told her what Patrol and the police had done and had discovered in Patrol's and the police's search for Burrell and his pocket watch.

She looked shocked after I had finished; I

pulled up a chair and sat down next to her and put my arm around her shoulders to comfort her. It was all over.